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A NEW

SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

EDITED BY R. H. HORNE,

AUTHOR OF "ORION,"—"GREGORY VII.," &c. &c.

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"It is an easy thing to praise or blame:
The hard task, and the virtue, to do both."

SECOND EDITION.

VOL. I.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

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INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS.

WHEN the innumerable and conflicting opinions and interests are taken into consideration with reference to an attempt like the present, together with the many conflicting powers and weaknesses, real talents and questionable pretensions, empty vanities and well-founded ambitions, which such a work must comprise, and when all these heterogeneous activities are described or discussed by an honest out-speaking voice "without fear or favour," the matter of surprise at any responsible party being subject to all manner of attacks, aspersions, and slighting detractions, must be very small indeed. The only wonder is, that they should not have been far more general than has been experienced in the present instance. I have received many compliments from various portions of the press for the good temper and cor-

dial spirit with which my very difficult task had been accomplished; and most frankly do I acknowledge that I was not prepared to meet with so much in return. I was upon dangerous ground at every step, and I knew it. Therefore, for honesty's sake, as well as the reader's, I thought it best to walk forwards with a total forgetfulness of consequences to myself. This has had a beneficial influence on the work in hand, whatever may have been written to the contrary, and has not been attended I verily believe with more annoyance to its Editor than if he had hopelessly endeavoured either to write sugar-and-water notices like those in a work of similar design written by his critic of the "Athenæum," or to make every popular man a monster of perfection.

For great fairness of treatment from several quarters, I have to express my gratitude; for great unfairness and no small personality, I shall have a word or two presently.

There is seldom any danger in speaking of the dead, but to speak freely of the living has hitherto, in this country, been a proceeding always fraught with mischief to the avowed speaker. But how then, it will be asked, is this to be reconciled with the fact of the daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly declarations and disquisitions, often expressed in rather unmeasured terms, not merely of abstract criticism, but often of personal animadversion or

attack? The answer must be, because these are done anonymously. Not that the name of the writer or editor is generally unknown to the individual who is severely or otherwise handled, but then the name is not openly avowed; and herein seems to consist the last degree of unbearable offence. Fairly to give a name is to offer a mark,—and a stone or an arrow is the speedy recognition of the openness of the proceeding. In my case, the air has been partially darkened by a shower of both, till the public became perplexed in its opinion. I knew what all this meant, and the public has since discovered without being told.

Had the hostilities been confined to the publication in question, which had, and always must have, quite enough faults and short-comings, to be amenable to severe strictures, the latent intention of damaging its reception by the public, would not have been so soon apparent, and would even have had some good colour of justice; but when the work itself is evaded, or treated with slighting sneers, and its editor, both personally, and in his own works, is made the main subject of angry discussions, pretended analysis, and laboured ridicule, the real object must be apparent to any dispassionate observer.

The reason for this, adduced by a well-known Editor, is expressed with a ludicrous innocence

which will amuse some of his contemporaries not a little. After criticising a newspaper advertisement of the work, which, for want of a comma, he declares himself so unable to understand that it made him "fall down," he says, "All, therefore, that we learn is, that a Spirit of the Age is neither British brandy nor a Hammersmith Ghost; but *bona fide* a series of criticisms—reviews, as it were, *taken out of our, and our periodical contemporaries' hands!*"* Is it possible that I could be so wicked! With what sort of conscience could I dare to do once in my life, what Mr. Jerdan does every week of his! What a lost condition of mind must be that man's who should think to take—as it were—a number of reviews out of the hands of this excellent, careful, and impartial journal! It would be the next bad thing to taking the books!

Whatever amount of truth there may be in the above declaration of the causes of animosity, there were perhaps others. A critic in the "Morning Herald" observes that I shall "at least gain praise for a quick and generous appreciation of contemporary merit." I cannot say his kind anticipations have been generally realized; for although in some quarters great compliments, mixed with some fair severities, have been awarded, the majority have seemed more disposed to denounce the attempt

* "Literary Gazette," March 16, 1844.

than examine what was done. Besides, it was not unreasonable to expect that gentlemen possessing periodical position and influence would be prompt to defend themselves and their private friends.

I am aware that the accusation of clique and coterie has been made against this work in several quarters of the press. The opinion is totally unfounded. It could only have been derived from some erroneous impressions with which the work is in no degree implicated. Thus originated, the cry has been caught, and re-echoed in several periodicals. If by the terms clique or coterie it is meant that I am personally intimate with certain individuals who hold eminent positions in literature, some of whom entertain many sentiments in common with those which pervade this work, the same fact will apply to most editors, and to most authors of critical productions. But if it be meant to insinuate that I have admitted any undue private influence, or suffered this work to become the private organ of a few peculiar opinions, instead of the conscientious fulfilment, according to my means, of a public duty, then it becomes me to deny it in the most unqualified terms. Nevertheless, I have been made personally responsible for every article almost in the same breath as that which erroneously accused me of being the "brazen head" of a clique. I have some need of such a head, one would think, from

the number of blows that, glancing off from the surface of the work, have been dealt upon the "front of the offending," and it is only charitable to suppose that some of the dealers really think me protected after some such fashion. But one thing concerning even this assumed clique should be added—namely, its prodigious expansiveness, reaching as it does on the wings of sympathy and fair dealing with opposite classes of intellect and endeavour—from the Actual to the Ideal; from Dickens to Wordsworth; from Southwood Smith to Carlyle; from the etherial wand of Tennyson to the "touching" baton of Punch; from the unpopular Greek-souled Landor to the popular sea-king Marryatt; from fine poets little known, to old and high reputations; from Dr. Pusey to William Howitt.

In some few cases individuals have been classed together in the work on account of their similarity—in *most cases* on account of their presenting such points of *dissimilarity* as would the better bring forth by contrast their mutual excellencies and strongest characteristics. It is not my fault if all these things have been misunderstood or misrepresented. No such clique could possibly exist; nor could such an assemblage of intellectual antagonisms be held together for a single day—except in a book.

There is one peculiarity in the remarks, whether

of applause, or ridicule, or angry attack, upon the present work—and that is the constant mention of my name in the case of every article or fragment of an article—not merely as the responsible party, but as the actual writer in every instance. The example thus set me may not be a good one. The temptation, however, to follow it, is not easily to be resisted on such an occasion as this.

Having mentioned Mr. Jerdan first, on account of his polite explanation of the causes of animosity displayed in several quarters, I may as well say a word or two more in this place. He thus writes of me—

"His next movement is to pour out the vials of his wrath upon Thomas Ingoldsby, one of the most original and entertaining writers, and one of the most curious as well as tuneful versifiers of the day (in the former equal to Butler, in the latter to Pope)—*none of which* and other rare merits can the *New Spirit of the Age* detect," &c.

In the first edition, as in the present, will be found the following :—

"In freedom and melody of comic versification, and in the originality of compound rhymes, the 'Ingoldsby Legends' surpass every thing of the kind that has appeared since the days of Hudibras and of Peter Pindar. * * * The legends contain in almost every page the best possible illustration of the true principle of rhyming, which the best poets, and the public, have always felt to depend solely upon a good ear, and (more especially in the *English* language) to have nothing whatever to do with the eye and the similarity of letters,—an absurd notion which the majority of critics, to this very day, entertain and display. These legends are, in this respect, philological studies, indis-

putable theoretically, and as novel as they are amusing in practice. The most incongruous and hitherto unimaginable combinations become thoroughly malleable in the Ingoldsby hand, and words of the most dissimilar letters constitute *perfect rhymes*, single, double, and triple. Moreover, these instances are not a few; they are abundant and almost in every page."—*New Spirit of the Age*, vol. i. pp. 139—40.

After this, two entire pages of the present work are devoted to extract and remark in illustration of these very excellencies, "none of which could the New Spirit of the Age detect." A very carefully reading and writing gentleman is this critic. But he excelled this in a previous performance upon one of my works. When "Cosmo de' Medici" appeared, he reviewed it in his favourite strain of compliment and ridicule inextricably mixed, so that it would seem easy to retreat upon any opinion, but wishing to justify some charge of exaggerated language he took a speech of the principal comic character, and giving to it the name of the principal tragic character—as though Cosmo had uttered it—he *then* said "Cosmo speaks of his son Garcia in a manner that reminds us of Tom Thumb!*"

Of course, it is unnecessary to make any remark upon such doings. These things are contemptible enough in themselves, but sometimes one ought to notice them by way of public service.

In political discussions, when an individual is the

* "Literary Gazette," March 25, 1837.

mouth-piece of the opinions of any great party, the protection of writing anonymously is, in the present state of the world, quite necessary; but in the republic of letters every man is a citizen and ought to be responsible for any demonstrable injustice or incompetency.

"Formally to demonstrate," says the Westminster Review, "the working abuses of criticism, in its present state, would be too liberal an expenditure of resistless logic. We need only point to criticism itself, and say, 'Behold!' and its imbecility and insincerity will, as the French say, leap up at your eyes. There is fortunately no difference of opinion on this point—all men, journalists and critics included, are agreed in condemning it as rife with glaring ignorance and dogmatic incapacity; and the few honourable exceptions (which it would be invidious to specify, and which, once for all, we beg to acknowledge and to exempt from our remarks) only make the general evil more apparent. * * Modern publishing—styled with such inimitable innocence, 'the trade,' is pure and glorious by the side of modern criticism. And if there are honourable exceptions, of what avail are they in this swarm of gad-flies? Did not the plague of flies darken the land of Egypt, and are not these writers, though individually beneath contempt, like grains of gunpowder, powerful in a mass?

"With so perfect an unanimity of execration as exists on the subject of criticism, it would be tedious to enter into the question as to whether it be an abuse or not; all we have to inquire is, whether this evil be inevitable; and if not, how can it be reformed? We are firmly convinced that it is not inevitable, and that it could be very materially reformed by the abolition and interdiction of the present infamous use of the anonymous."

Westminster Review, October, 1842.

To general readers these statements may appear extreme; they are nevertheless true; the writer boldly affixed the initials of his name to the article; and literary men very well know who he is. But things that are *too* true, are often "hushed up" by politic offenders. Had he, however, printed this identical paper as a separate publication with his name attached to it, then he would have experienced a very different treatment. The offence is not in criticism—but in affixing your name to your work.

Being now fairly "in the saddle," and pretty well surrounded by the enemy, it may not be an inappropriate moment for any one to ask "What do you consider justifiable in criticism?—Do you think severity of necessity unjust? You could expect nothing else on the first appearance of this publication; you can expect nothing else now." Certainly I expected nothing less; certainly I expect no less now. So far from objecting to it, I think a good rattling attack from the press now and then, does an author good; ruffles his feathers, makes him open his eyes widely, expand his wings to the utmost, look well about him, and refreshes all his faculties. But there should be some fair grounds for it; there should be some actual dealing with what an author or editor has done, rather than a long list given of what he has *not;* there should be some examin-

ation of his intellect, and as little allusion as possible to extraneous trivialities of private life.

To any articles so unpersonal, and negative as those of the writer in the "Athenæum" of March 23rd and 30th, it would seem captious to offer much objection; I shall, therefore, merely observe that if there was one writer, who by the character of his own mind and works, (evidencing a fear of giving the slightest offence by a strong opinion on matters not thoroughly established, and anxious to stand well with all the world) should have been among the last to send a review of the "New Spirit of the Age" to any able and impartial journal,—that writer was the author of three pleasant and gossipping volumes on continental "Music and Manners." There the success of his light and playful pen sufficiently indicates his right avocation; but when he undertakes anything in the shape of philosophical criticism, the "feebleness" of which he so frequently complains in all his critical remarks, is the best characteristic of his palpable incompetency. I pass over his accusations of the many names omitted in the "New Spirit of the Age," though some forty or fifty are included. His own book, published some years since, under the imposing title of "The Authors of England," contains only twelve names! Remarkable instance of the force of conscience.

But while there is a marked justice in an author claiming the right of singling out his critic, this act of justice is equally due, in flagrant instances, towards a periodical of high standing. Among the multifarious and arduous occupations of the editor of such a publication—the many eminent and diversified intellects and works he has to deal with, and the many conflicting passions, prejudices, and interests by which he is surrounded—and all this with scarcely a day's intermission—is it surprising that there should occasionally slip through his hands something which, however wise it may be to keep his own secret, he knows to be erroneous, unfair, or weak to the last degree. It is impossible but this should occasionally happen, and the recollection ought to make those who are aggrieved very tolerant towards the "quarter" where such things may have appeared. For my own part, I could not think, for a moment, of making an able and influential periodical answerable for some of the articles of facetious trifling which this unlucky "New Spirit of the Age" has called forth in various directions.

I come with much pleasure to a cursory examination of the unscrupulous hilarity of the amusing and facetious author of the "Irish Sketch Book," Mr. Michael Angelo Titmarsh, in dealing with literary subjects in the "Morning Chronicle."

He puts forth the following statements :—

"There is an easy candour about Mr. Horne which ought to encourage all persons to deal with him with similar sincerity. He appears to us to be generous, honest, in the main good-humoured, (for in the only instance in which his spleen is shewn in the two volumes of the "New Spirit of the Age," it is pardonable on account of a sort of clumsy sincerity) and he admires rightly, and not mean persons nor qualities."—*Morning Chronicle, April* 2, 1844.

Then follows the accusation of a total absence of anything new in the views,—that they are *all true, even to common-place;* and that Hazlitt was "one of the keenest and brightest critics that ever lived;—" (which I endured abundant odium for asserting ten years ago);—and then follows an account intended to show that Hazlitt had been a great traveller "over Europe," and our pleasant friend further chooses to say, by way of intimating that the work before him displays a very limited knowledge, that I am "enveloped in a good stout suit of undeniable Bow-bell cut," with a "waistcoat splendid in the way of decoration."

Now, although I have not the slightest objection to this gentleman's performance of the part of Adonis to the "Morning Chronicle," (on the contrary, it would be a great pleasure to see him doing it,) nor to anything he may choose to say concerning his own undeniable Arcadian cut; yet I do somewhat object to his dressing me out according to any extravagant fancy he may have, both personally and with reference to the literature he had before him,

and abusing so important a position of influence on the public mind, by inserting his "good fun" in the leading liberal morning paper. I acknowledge that I laughed at it as much as anybody at first, but on further consideration, it seems to me that he was not justified in doing so in such a quarter. Besides, the book was open enough on literary grounds for sharp handling, and the writer might have found ample grounds, either to advocate the cause of comic poetry, or to assist his friend, Ingoldsby, the "amusing poet," with the "harmless phantasies."

To whatever extent the proverb may be applied to Hazlitt, that no man is a prophet in his own country while he is alive, one might add something more from the treatment he and others experienced, viz.—the attempt to prove a man a fool on account of his place of residence. Hazlitt, alive and writing the "Spirit of the Age," was abundantly saluted with Bow-bell epithets, and often by those who resided perhaps in the next street, (but wrote anonymously.) There are many people who seem impressed with the idea that wherever they themselves reside must be vulgar of necessity. But Hazlitt dead, becomes a great traveller "over Europe," as the small tourists call a trip to the Continent. How much I have done, in many quarters, to show my estimation of the great genius and integrity of Hazlitt, the true power he displayed of heart and head, is well known to

many. It never occurred to me that his "Notes of a Journey through France and Italy" would one day be adduced in proof of my unworthiness to breathe the air of literature beside his works. But the relative positions have in fact a pleasantry about them not contemplated by the very amusing author of the "Irish" and "Paris Sketch Books." When Hazlitt was writing the "Spirit of the Age," he was resident in London; and at that very time, (in 1825) I was one of the junior officers in a foreign man-of-war; and instead of sunning myself in the neighbourhood and countenance of Mr. Michael Angelo Titmarsh, there were several occasions on which I should have been too happy to have exchanged the scorching glare of the Bay of Mexico, or the thunders of the Gulf of Florida for the merry vicinity of Bow-bells. Nor should I subsequently have been indisposed to such a locality in preference to the somewhat more adventurous proximity of the icebergs in the Northern Seas, or the miscellaneous wanderers in the gloomy solitudes of American forests, though I have never "written a book" about them. But enough of this gossip. It is indeed common to see gentlemen so very proud of their little trips on the Continent, that nobody can live near them at home without being laughed at.

Still my ingenious noticiary every now and then makes an effort to be just. He says, after sundry

remarks about coats and waistcoats, and other equally irrelative nonsense,—"To drop this tailor's metaphor—we will briefly say, that beyond the qualifications of justice and good-humour we cannot see that Mr. Horne has any right to assume the critical office." I am sorry for my real deficiencies (justice and good humour reckoning for nothing), but I fear I must suffer the consequences of his refined discrimination in grave matters of criticism, though I may demur to some of the continental ebullitions of our sprightly and elastic Tourist. He accuses me also of using great words without corresponding ideas—or with no ideas or images at all. I admit that he may have borrowed this accusation from what "Punch" so admirably designates as the "east wind" of the "Spectator;" but in no case did any one ever adduce illustrations of the assertion. The few that have occasionally been paraded, with a view to show the absence of ideas or images, might rather have been adduced to prove the contrary of the assertion. This unique performance concludes with the complimentary admission that the Editor of the ridiculed volumes is "never ungenerous or unmanly: his sympathies are honourable and well-placed; and he tells the truth as far as he knows it. So as he deals with others *ought* he to be done by," &c. Oh, very well—most gladly will I shake hands with

Mr. Titmarsh in public or private on such grounds —I forgive him all his nonsense and fun; and I can only declare I should have been too happy to have been "dealt by," as others, taking the work in its entireness, have been dealt with.

To the clerical disquisition in the "Foreign and Colonial Quarterly Review,"* I shall offer no reply; because there is nothing unfairly personal in the arguments used against me, however novel the proposition may be that a critic in literature must also have proved himself a critic in matters of high church divinity. As to the defence of Thomas Ingoldsby, if the writer's taste in poetry leads him in that direction, the matter may be settled between him and the public. I am only glad to see that the critic does just admit, with regard to the Ingoldsby Legends, that,—

"There are too frequently images and expressions which we could wish away; and we are quite certain that these hints will not be lost to the writer, *coming as they do from friends.*"†

So, so, if gentlemen volunteer these admissions, it saves one the less agreeable task in self-defence, of explaining such things for them. For the rest of the remarks, they are such as might have been expected from the writer who has previously noticed my many deficiencies in the "Athenæum," and

* "New Quarterly," or "Home, Foreign, and Colonial Review," No. I.

† "New Quarterly Review," July, 1844.

who, no doubt, from his own great researches in the same walk of literature, as evinced by his sketches in the previously mentioned Twelve "Authors of England," found a peculiar *gusto* in denouncing the present attempt.*

But one remark I must address to Thomas Ingoldsby with reference to various marked attacks,—that in dealing with his "Legends," which I conceived it a duty to treat unsparingly, I yet exercised the utmost forbearance towards himself personally—a forbearance which has not been exercised by his friends who have attacked me, but which I have not resented upon him, nor intend.

When the obvious reply to any onslaught from the "New Monthly," would have been to give a simple analysis of the very first Legend ("The Lord of Thoulouse") that was put forth in that magazine, one would have thought that no such thing at least as an obviously personal attack upon me, in the vain hope of supporting such Legends by casting me down, would have been hazarded by that magazine. However, I gave very great provocation to its principal contributor, not likely to be excused for being solely on public grounds, and rigidly kept within those limits; and I am indisposed to retaliate. The same feeling will, I trust, sustain me under the laboured personalities and puns of "Ainsworth's Magazine," though I might have

thought better of its gallant Editor, if, after making his arrangements to crush me, he had "clothed" the neck of his war-horse with thunder, by adding the weight of his own name to the article. But perhaps he thought his hand would be sufficiently recognized in the three last lines, wherein, expressing the preference he would so gladly have given to a different editor, he reproachfully exclaims, — "at least he would have described externals, boots, hats, and buttons, without prejudice or favor."* To neither of these magazines do I make any rejoinder. I receive their shots, and pass on my way. I presume a period will some day arrive when Thomas Ingoldsby may consider himself sufficiently avenged by eight or ten attacks in return for my one.

The "Church of England Quarterly Review" declaring, that it has "no power to estimate the claims of Mr. Robert Browning, and Mr. J. W. Marston," adds, "our acquaintance with their compositions is wholly gathered from the criticisms in these volumes" This confession is a ludicrous accident, as I shall immediately show. The critic goes on to quote a passage of half a page for ridicule, declaring that "the italics are his own"—three lines of italics, intended to mark the excess of absurdity, followed by these crushing words :—

* "Ainsworth's Magazine," April, 1844.

"Oh rare and incomprehensible 'Spirit of the Age,' and expounder of that Spirit still more rare and incomprehensible!"—*Church Quarterly, July*, 1844.

Ah, indeed! The whole of this "incomprehensible" passage is taken verbatim from this very "Church Quarterly," where it appeared no longer ago than October, 1842, pp. 467-8, &c., in an article entitled "Robert Browning's Poems," with which the "Church Quarterly" now declares it never had any previous acquaintance! The writer who quoted the passage in the "New Spirit of the Age," only quoted from his own article, and therefore did not think it necessary to place the quotations between inverted commas.

"It is in such passages as *these* that the *real* temper of this book displays itself, and we read not the Spirit of the Age but of a clique."—*Church Quarterly*, 1844.

"The real temper of this book!"—which book? The "Church Quarterly," or the "New Spirit of the Age?"—for the passage has appeared in both. But this wise Quarterly goes blundering on:—

"We have said that we know nothing of Mr. Browning's poetry, except from the quotations in the volume before us."—*Ibid.*

Then look in the "Church Quarterly" for October, 1842, I once more say,—and bid it farewell, with all kindly hilarity.

In the system of individualised hostility which has been pursued with respect to me, instead of review-

ing the "New Spirit of the Age," an hostility which renders this reply mere foil-play—in comparison to the earnest labour bestowed upon every one of the more elaborate articles of the work in question—I venture to think that the antagonists committed an error in their mode of hostility. In several of the very quarters where these attacks are made upon me, I have been myself a contributor of essays, reviews or criticisms. Nobody will suppose I allude to the "Literary Gazette," or the "Spectator." The contributions of which I speak have been, it may be, in some cases, under the auspices of previous proprietors; but when "a property is purchased," and the original name is retained, it may fairly be assumed that large sums of money are not paid for nothing. Besides in some cases, the names of the Editors were a sufficient guarantee that the contributors should be of some weight. Let us, for instance, take the "Westminster Review."

Though I have been very highly complimented in the "Westminster Review," during the time it has been in the hands of its present proprietor and editor, it was when this review was conducted by Dr. Bowring and Colonel Perronet Thompson that I contributed various articles. The range of subjects was tolerably wide, and the conductors of the "Westminster," at that time, were men whose intellect and

general attainments are well known to most people. In short, I have frequently written "We" upon subjects of philosophy, art, and general literature, in this very review where a writer now strives, "with might and main," to ridicule and cough me down, because he conceives it a more easy task than to write the work down.

Acting upon the very excellent argument of a previously quoted number of the "Westminster," on the errors and abuses of English criticism, as chiefly to be traced to the anonymous in literature, the public will naturally feel it is but just that they should know something of the author of this very irrelevant and malevolent tirade in the "Westminster Review," to which I have last alluded. His signature is N. U. S., which letters are not the true initials of his name. The signature, therefore, is worse than a flourish of anonymous valour. Howbeit, we may as well bring him forth, for his concealment is unavailing; and besides, *directly against the principles so ably advocated by the "Westminster Review."* I intend to spare his name from motives which never occurred to him in writing his paper; in fact, his motive was to do all the injury to me personally, with the public, that he possibly could. In addition to this, he evidently hurries forward to thrust me aside, as though, standing in my place,

he would exclaim—'*I* am the right person to display the true 'Spirit of the Age!' '

"The structure of the mind which assumes to do this is a proper subject for enquiry; for it must be a mind of no light capacity to be capable of weighing and looking through so many minds, to discover the spirit within them. Such a mind is in itself a great Spirit of the Age, and we are disposed to welcome its advent in a reverential mood. Such a mind would not enter on its task without due knowledge, added to intuitive judgment."—*Westminster Review*, June, 1844.

The individual then, who seems to consider himself so much more highly qualified for the task, and who has moreover thought himself justified in evading the review he assumed to write of the "New Spirit of the Age;" justified also in using vulgar epithets concerning me, such as comparing me to a dog; in raking up an author's earliest publication, and detaching any intemperate, crude or extravagant expressions; in playing the old trick of garbling extracts from different works and placing them absurdly in juxtaposition, as though they were from the same work; in garbling extracts from the work itself, so as to give certain articles or passages a colour precisely opposite to that which they really possess, and to make some who are highly praised appear, on the whole, severely blamed or satirized; in gravely quoting humorous ironies as serious opinions and propositions; and in wasting the reader's time by his laborious and abortive efforts at measuring, and sounding, and cutting, up

my other works,—is the author of a poem entitled "a Tale of Tucuman!" It was written on the ground-plan of a matter-of-fact poem, and intended to be a close copy of the metrical style adopted in the stanzas of Don Juan. He was also, some ten years ago, the author of a variety of political and practical papers, which, whenever confined to his natural range, were vigorous and sensible; but apt to fall either into hopeless dullness, or exaggerations and gross invectives, and which were put forth under the title—not of a second Junius, but actually of that writer himself revivified in his person!—*viz.*, "Junius Redivivus." There are a dozen, perhaps a score of people, who may recollect something of this. He possessed considerable ability in practical mechanics. I, for one, thought he had quite a genius for them; and think so still. He would do well if he confined himself to these things. No man can advance beyond his nature.

The article by this strikingly ungenial, and, in this instance, misapplied individual, who seems to wish at the same time to put forth once more his views on political measures, the New Poor Law, and also on mechanics, railroads, &c.—should rather have been published as a pamphlet, and entitled *exactly* according to its contents—"A Dissertation, vituperative and unscrupulous, on R. H. Horne and his works, previous to the 'New

Spirit of the Age;' with two pages, measured by rule, on the principle of population and laudations of the New Poor Law,—five pages on the Ten Hours Bill, —three pages comprising a sort of laudatory notification of those Engineers, Machinists, Poor-Law Commissioners, Chemists, Politicians, &c., who are *not* included in Mr. Horne's last publication;—and sundry digressions on steam-engines, spinning-jennies, railways, &c., by Junius Redivivus."

My works are not to his taste. I am sorry for it; but I must bear it with resignation from a critic who proceeds to place Hogarth on a par with the author of "Good Tommy and Naughty Harry" in the "old spelling book;" and to lament over Dickens's ignorance of the first principles of political economy and the "undue pressure of population." He gravely argues in this very critique, that Mr. Pickwick, the Brothers Cheeryble, and other kind old gentlemen, should have remembered, that Sam Weller, Nicholas Nickleby, Kate, &c., were only individuals "amongst a huge class who suffer under the radical evils of bad legislation,"—and so, we must infer, they should have left them to the Union Workhouse. As to Ralph Nickleby, he says, "Justice being done in early training" he "would not have been enabled to accomplish his evil deeds, and the almsgiving of the Brothers Cheeryble would not have been needed!" A know-

ledge of the true doctrine of demand and supply would have made Scrooge pause before sending Bob Cratchit a turkey and punch—for "unless there were turkey and punch in surplus, some one must go without," if poor Bob had them! And this direful dullness proceeding from the gentleman who, drawing himself up, has just told me to stand aside—and look at a Philosopher! The same critic too, is so enamoured of the New Poor Law that he thinks it "bene*volent*, bene*scient*, and bene*ficent*" (these italics are his own) to put our paupers on half-allowance, because our ship is not fully victualled for crew and officers. It strikes me that there is considerably more hard-hearted selfishness and expediency than any of those three attributes, in such a proceeding. His metaphor of the ship and the half-starved paupers, illustrates, I hope, *not* a portion of the New Spirit of the Age, as Junius with so much complacency declares, but a portion of the worst part of the *old* Spirit of our Age, and the sooner it is worn out the better for us all!

"There are many very worthy people and very confident critics who would 'grin intelligence from ear to ear,' if you placed before them Laplace's 'Mécanique Celeste,' or Fichte's 'Wissenschaftslehre,' and honestly tell you that for their parts, they did not understand much of the subject; so that you could attach no great value to their opinion. There is no harm in this: 'each man in his time plays many parts,' but is proficient in few matters, and you only heed his opinion on those matters. But under the present system, if a critic

speaks on a subject he does not understand, who is to confront him? Who is to say, 'Why B.,' you reviewed D.'s Mathematics: you don't understand Mathematics!"

Westminster Review, Oct. 1842, *p.* 431.

This is just what anybody may say now. "Junius, you reviewed C.'s poetry! *You* don't understand poetry! So that one can attach no great value to your opinion."

Nor can anybody more safely rely upon the "facts" put forth by this Junius. Indeed, his poetry is made up of what his facts ought to be—realities; and his facts are made up of what his poetry never can be—fiction. He says that I have been one of the Factory Commissioners, and published my report on the Factories. I never was a Factory Commissioner, and I never published any such report. What I wrote for the Government was concerning the employment and treatment of poor children in the iron-works. The same writer says of me with a spitefulness which is amusing.—"His epic has been sold for a farthing." Three editions of "Orion," were *given* to the public by the means best calculated to avoid the trouble of gratuitous distribution. The malicious turn of the above statement makes it look as if the poem, having been published at a price, had shared the fate of the "Tale of Tucuman," and been sold for waste paper.

This same critic, who would also demolish me on poetical grounds, gives a cursory hammering at my tragedies of "Cosmo de' Medici," and the "Death of Marlowe," with all the vigour that might be anticipated from any man of his mind, with such a purpose in hand. I offer no remonstrance to this. There they are—make what you can of them—I wish they were better. But when he comes to the one last published, and the only one I regard as a maturely finished production, he says,—

"With Gregory VII. we neither make nor meddle."—*Westminster Review*, 1844.

Why not? Making, out of the question—why not meddle? He has shown no previous scruples of any kind. But, possibly, he might have recollected passages like the following, which deterred him:—

"Amidst various exhibitions of dramatic power, of poetry, and energy of purpose, the chief merit of this tragedy of Gregory VII., is its accurate delineation of the different characters; and more especially that of the principal personage, whether viewed as a psychological study, or examined by the varied lights of history." * * * * "The work is evidently the production of a poet possessing the highest dramatic powers," &c.—*Westminster Review*, Vol. xxxv., No. 2.

These are not garbled extracts. More high praise remains behind in the same tone. I think the remark previously made, that the hostilities against

the "New Spirit of the Age," were not directed in the best mode for effect by being levelled solely at me, must now be still more apparent. I submit that the press cannot deliberately give a position, and take it away at a moment's notice.

"Genius is essentially unconscious."—*Westminster Review*, 1844.

So is stupidity. So, let us hope, are "envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness." So, let us hope, are evil-speaking and slandering.

I am aware that this ground is not worth so much walking over, and that to have stopped short after a few paces would have been considered more becoming to myself; but the matter does not rest between me, and this writer;—there is a far more important question involved, *viz.* the "Westminster Review," where such a writer is permitted to declaim, and that portion of the Public which is influenced by that review. I should likewise add that these introductory comments are made less with a view to defend myself than to display some of the abuses of anonymous criticism.

I have had a task to perform in this reply, not difficult certainly, but very unpleasant. I hope I have gone through it without captiousness, and with tolerably equal temper. I have been attacked very little for what has been done, but very much for what has been omitted. There was not space for every body

who is eminent; and considerably less than a hundredth part of the space requisite for every one who thinks he is eminent. Several omissions I am very sorry to acknowledge, not of those who should more properly be included in a different series—as of Science, Politics, &c., not one of which did I intend, or ever intimate that I should edite; but of those individuals who might well claim to have been included in the present volumes. The difficulty was to know where to stop. As it is, I answer for what is *in* the work, as a whole. Had I been merely a "professional author" (a more honourable profession I cannot conceive possible, though the nature of nearly all my works must sufficiently disprove the assertion,) I should have, perhaps, been more anxious to include only those names which are already popular. Among these, however, my wish was to make honourable mention of some who were highly deserving, and whose genius I do not at all doubt, will be acknowledged by the world before many years. I did not think there could be any need to include, or that anybody would be so misgiving of his own and the popular admiration, as to ask why I had omitted Moore, Campbell, Barry Cornwall, &c. &c.

I have retained the title—admissibly far too sweeping for any work like the present—but suitable enough when understood that this is only a

Section or branch of a proposed series, as I had thought sufficiently explained in the Preface to the First Edition. That this section has many real faults, I too well know; but they have not been pointed out, except by one or two critics. These may have done so severely, but having done so fairly and upon just grounds, I beg to express my respect for their judgment, and to add, that I have derived benefit from those who did really judge for themselves.

R. H. HORNE.

CHARLES DICKENS.

"One touch of Nature makes the whole world kin."

"For this cause interpret you all my deeds and sayings, in the perfectest sense; and do what lies in you to keep me always merry. Be frolic now, my lads, cheer up your hearts, and joyfully read the rest, with all the ease of your body and profit of your reins. But hearken, joltheads, you viedazes, or dickens take ye, remember to drink a health to me for the like favour again, and I will pledge you instantly."—RABELAIS (new edition): *Author's Prologue*, p. 115.

CHARLES DICKENS.

If an extensive experience and knowledge of the world is certain in most cases to render a man suspicious, full of doubts and incredulities, equally certain is it that with other men such experience and such knowledge exercise this influence at rare intervals only, or in a far less degree; while in some respects the influence even acts in a directly opposite way, and the extraordinary things they have seen or suffered, cause them to be very credulous and of open-armed faith to embrace strange novelties. They are not startled at the sound of fresh wonders in the moral or physical world, — they laugh at no feasible theory, and can see truth through the refractions of paradox and contradictory extremes. They *know* that there are more things in heaven and on the earth than in "your philosophy." They observe the fables and the visions of one age, become the facts

and practices of a succeeding age—perhaps even of a few years after their first announcement, and before the world has done laughing: they are slow to declare any character or action to be unnatural, having so often witnessed some of the extreme lights and shadows which flit upon the outskirts of Nature's capacious circle, and have perhaps themselves been made to feel the bitter reality of various classes of anomaly previously unaccountable, if not incredible. They have discovered that in matters of practical conduct a greater blunder cannot in general be made, than to "judge of others by yourself," or what you think, feel, and fancy of yourself. But having found out that the world is not "all alike," though like enough for the charities of real life, they identify themselves with other individualities, then search within for every actual and imaginary resemblance to the great majority of their fellow-creatures, which may give them a more intimate knowledge of aggregate nature, and thus enlarge the bounds of unexclusive sympathy.

To men of this genial habit and maturity of mind, if also they have an observing eye for externals, there is usually a very tardy admission of the alleged madness of a picture of scenery, or the supposed grossness of a caricature of the human countenance. The traveller and the voyager, who has, moreover, an eye for art, has often seen enough to convince

him that the genius of Turner and Martin has its foundation not only in elemental but in actual truth; nor could such an observer go into any large concourse of people (especially of the poorer classes, where the unsuppressed character has been suffered to rise completely to the surface) without seeing several faces, which, by the addition of the vices of social man, might cause many a dumb animal to feel indignant at the undoubtedly deteriorated resemblance. The curse of evil circumstances acting upon the "third and fourth generations," when added to the "sins of the fathers," can and does turn the lost face of humanity into something worse than brutish. As with the face, so is it with the character of mankind; nothing can be too lofty, too noble, too lovely to be natural; nor can anything be too vicious, too brutalized, too mean, or too ridiculous. It is observable, however, that there are many degrees and fine shades in these frequent degradations of man to the mere animal. Occasionally they are no degradation, but rather an advantage, as a falcon eye, or a lion-brow, will strikingly attest. But more generally the effect is either gravely humorous, or grotesquely comic; and in these cases the dumb original is not complimented. For, you may see a man with a bull's forehead and neck, and a mean grovelling countenance, (while that of the bull is physically grand and high-purposed,) and the dog,

the sheep, the bird, and the ape in all their varieties, are often seen with such admixtures as are really no advantage. Several times in an individual's life he may meet in the actual world with most of the best and worst kind of faces and characters of the world of fiction. It is true that there are not to be found a whole tribe of Quilps and Quasimodos, (you would not *wish* it?) but once in the life of the student of character he may have a glimpse of just such a creature; and that, methinks, were quite familiar proof enough both for nature and art. Those who have exclusively portrayed the pure ideal in grandeur or beauty, and those also who have exclusively, or chiefly, portrayed monstrosities and absurdities, have been recluse men, who drew with an inward eye, and copied from their imaginations: the men who have given us the largest amount of truth under the greatest variety of forms, have always been those who went abroad into the world in all its ways; and in the works of such men will always be found those touches of nature which can only be copied at first-hand, and the extremes of which originalities are never unnaturally exceeded. There are no caricatures in the portraits of Hogarth, nor are there any in those of Dickens. The most striking thing in both, is their apparently inexhaustible variety and truth of character.

Charles Lamb, in his masterly essay "On the Genius of Hogarth," says, that in the print of the "Election Dinner," there are more than thirty distinct classes of face, all in one room, and disposed in a natural manner, and all partaking in the spirit of the scene. The uproarious fun and comic disasters in the picture of "Chairing the Member;" the fantastic glee and revelries of "Southwark Fair;" the irony and farcical confusion of the "March to Finchley;" the ludicrous and voluble pertinacities of the "Enraged Musician;" and the rich humours of "Beer Street,"—in every one, and in every part of which pictures, there is character, and characteristic thought or action,—are well known to all the numerous class of Hogarth's admirers. How very like they are to many scenes in the works of Dickens, not substantially nor in particular details, but in moral purpose and finished execution of parts, and of the whole, must surely have been often observed. The resemblance is apparent with regard to single figures and to separate groups—all with different objects, and often in conflict with the rest—and equally apparent with relation to one distinct and never-to-be-mistaken whole into which the various figures and groups are fused, and over which one general and harmonizing atmosphere expands, not by any apparent intention in the skilful hand of the artist, but as if exhaled from and sustained by the natural vitality of the scene.

But the comic humour for which these two great masters of character are most popularly known, constitutes a part only of their genius, and certainly not the highest part. Both possess tragic power—not at all in the ideal world, nor yet to be regarded as mere harsh, unredeemed matter-of-fact reality — but of the profoundest order. Mingled with their graphic tendencies to portray absurdity and ugliness, both display a love for the beautiful, and the pathetic. In the latter respect more especially, Mr. Dickens greatly excels; and two or three of his scenes, and numerous incidental touches, have never been surpassed, if the heart-felt tears of tens of thousands of readers are any test of natural pathos. But although their tragic power is so great, it is curious to observe that neither Hogarth nor Dickens has ever portrayed a tragic character, in the higher or more essential sense of the term. The individual whose bounding emotions and tone of thought are in an habitual state of passionate elevation, and whose aims and objects, if actually attainable, are still, to a great extent, idealized by the glowing atmosphere of his imagination, and a high-charged temperament—such a character, which is always ready to meet a tragic result half-way, if not to produce it, finds no place in the works of either. In their works no one dies for a noble purpose, nor for an abstract passion. There is no walking to execu-

tion, or to a premature grave by any other means, with a lofty air of conscious right, and for some great soul-felt truth—no apprehension for a capital crime in which there is a noble bearing or exultation—no death-bed of greatness in resignation and contentment for the cause—for there is no great cause at stake. Their tragedy is the constant tragedy of private life—especially with the poorer classes. They choose a man or woman for this purpose, with sufficient strength of body and will, and for the most part vicious and depraved; they place them in just the right sort of desperate circumstances which will ripen their previous character to its disastrous end; and they then leave the practical forces of nature and society to finish the story. Most truly, and fearfully, and morally, is it all done—or rather, it all seems to happen, and we read it as a fac-simile, or a most faithful chronicle. Their heroes are without any tragic principle or purpose in themselves: they never tempt their fate or run upon destruction, but rush away from it, evade, dodge, hide, fight, wrestle, tear and scream at it as a downright horror, and finally die because they absolutely cannot help it. This is shown or implied in most of the violent deaths which occur in the works of these two inventive geniuses.

The tragic force, and deep moral warnings, contained in several of the finest works of Hogarth, have been fully recognized by a few great writers, but are

not yet recognized sufficiently by the popular sense. But even some of his pictures, which are deservedly among the least popular, from the revolting nature of their subject or treatment, do yet, for the most part, contain manifestations of his great genius. Of this class are the pictures on the "Progress of Cruelty:" —but who will deny the terrific truth of the last but one of the series. The cruel boy, grown up to cruel manhood, has murdered his mistress, apparently to avoid the trouble attending her being about to become a mother. He has cut her throat at night in a church-yard, and seeming to have become suddenly paralysed at the completeness of his own deed, which he was too brutally stupid to comprehend till it was really done, two watchmen have arrested him. There lies his victim — motionless, extinct, quite passed away out of the scene, out of the world. Her white visage is a mere case that has opened, and the soul has utterly left it. No remains even of bodily pain are traceable, but rather in its vacuity a suggestion that the last nervous consciousness was a kind of contentment that her life of misery should be ended. The graves, the tombstones, the old church walls are alive and ejaculatory with horror—the man alone stands petrific. There is no bold Turpin, or Jack Sheppard-ing to carry the thing off heroically. Stony-jointed and stupified, the murderer stands between the two watchmen, who grasp him with a

horror which is the mixed effect of his own upon them, and of their scared discovery of the lifeless object before them. It is plain that if the murderer had been a flash Newgate Calendar hero, he could have burst away from them in a moment. But this would not have answered the purpose of the moralist.

The above series, nevertheless, is among the least estimable of the artist's works; and the last of this set is a horrible mixture of the real and ideal, each assisting the other to produce a most revolting effect. The remains of the executed murderer, which are extended upon the dissecting table, display a consciousness of his situation, and a hideous sensation of helpless yet excruciating agony. Such a picture, though the moral aim is still apparent, is not in the legitimate province of art; and a similar objection might be made to the terrific picture of "Gin Lane," notwithstanding the genius it displays. These latter productions we have quoted, to show that even in his objectionable pictures, Hogarth was never a mere designer of extravagances, and also to mark the point where the comparison with him and Dickens stops. In dealing with repulsive characters and actions, the former sometimes does so in a repulsive manner, not artistically justifiable by any means, because it is a gross copy of the fact. The latter, never does this; and his power of dealing with the

worst possible characters, at their worst moments, and suggesting their worst language, yet never once committing himself, his book, or his reader, by any gross expression or unredeemed action, is one of the most marvellous examples of fine skill and good taste the world ever saw, and one great (negative) cause of his universal popularity. Had the various sayings and doings, manifestly suggested in some parts of his works, been simply written out—as they would have been in the time of Fielding and Smollet—his works would never have attained one tenth part of their present circulation. Three words—nay, three letters—would have lost him his tens of thousands of readers in nearly every class of society, and they would have lost all the good and all the delight they have derived from his writings—to say nothing of future times.

Upon such apparently slight filaments and conditions does popularity often hang! An author seldom knows how vast an amount of success may depend upon the least degree of forbearance, and even if he does know, is apt to prefer his humour, and take his chance. The effect of a few gross scenes and expressions in the works of several great writers, as a continued drawback to their acknowledged fame, is sufficiently and sadly palpable; nor can we be entirely free from apprehension that eventually, as refinement advances, they may cease to be read alto-

gether, and be exiled to some remote niche in the temple of fame, to enjoy their own immortality. There are strong signs of this already.

Mr. Dickens is one of those happily constituted individuals who can "touch pitch without soiling his fingers;" the peculiar rarity, in his case, being that he can do so without gloves; and, grasping its clinging blackness with both hands, shall yet retain no soil, nor ugly memory. That he is at home in a wood---in green-lanes and all sweet pastoral scenes—who can doubt it that has ever dwelt among them? But he has also been through the back slums of many a St. Giles's. He never "picks his way," but goes splashing on through mud and mire. The mud and mire fly up, and lose themselves like ether—he bears away no stain—nobody has one splash. Nor is the squalid place so bad as it was before he entered it, for some "touch of nature" — of unadulterated pathos—of a crushed human heart uttering a sound from out the darkness and the slough, has left its echo in the air, and half purified it from its malaria of depravity.

A few touches of genuine good feeling, of rich humour, and of moral satire, will redeem anything, so far as the high principle, right aim and end of writing are concerned; this, however, will not suffice for extensive popularity in these days. The form and expression must equally be considered, and the lan-

guage managed skilfully, especially in the use of sundry metropolitan dialects. The secret was fully understood, and admirably practised by Sir E. L. Bulwer in his novel of "Paul Clifford;" it was grievously misunderstood, except in the matter of dialect, by Mr. Ainsworth in his "Jack Sheppard," which was full of unredeemed crimes, but being told without any offensive language, did its evil work of popularity, and has now gone to its cradle in the cross-roads of literature, and should be henceforth hushed up by all who have—as so many have —a personal regard for its author.

The methods by which such characters and scenes as have been alluded to, are conveyed to the reader with all the force of verisimilitude, yet without offence, are various, though it would perhaps be hardly fair to lift the curtain, and show the busy-browed artist "as he appeared" with his hands full. One means only, as adopted by Mr. Dickens, shall be mentioned, and chiefly as it tends to bring out a trait of his genius as well as art. When he has introduced a girl—her cheeks blotched with rouge, her frock bright red, her boots green, her hair stuck over with yellow hair-papers, and a glass of "ruin" in her hand—the very next time he alludes to her, he calls her "this young lady!" Now, if he had called this girl by her actual designation, as awarded to her by indignant, moral man—who has nothing

whatever to do with such degradation—the book would have been destroyed; whereas, the reader perfectly well knows what class the poor gaudy outcast belongs to, and the author gains a humorous effect by the evasive appellation. In like manner he deals with a dirty young thief, as "the first-named young gentleman;"* while the old Jew Fagin—a horrible compound of all sorts of villainy, who teaches "the young idea" the handicraft of picking pockets, under pretence of having an amusing game of play with the boys — the author designates as "the merry old gentleman!" Every body knows what this grissly old hyena-bearded wretch really is, and everybody is struck with a sense of the ludicrous at the preposterous nature of the compliment. In this way the author avoids disgust—loses no point of his true meaning—and gains in the humour of his scene. He has other equally ingenious methods, which perhaps may be studied, or perhaps they are the result of the fine tact of a subtle instinct and good taste; enough, however, has been said on this point.

The tragic power and finer qualities of expression in Hogarth are elucidated with exquisite precision and truth by Charles Lamb in his Essay, where he

* "Un dopo pranzo, il Furbo e mastro Bates avendo un invito per la sera, il primo nominato *signorino* si ficcò in capo di mostrare un certo genio," &c. Translation, Milano, 1840. But to designate the Artful Dodger throughout, simply as "il Furbo," is hard — unhandsome.

calls particular attention to the "Rake's Progress;" the last scenes of "Marriage à la Mode;" "Industry and Idleness;" and the "Distressed Poet." He makes some fine comments upon the expression which is put into the face of the broken-down Rake, in the last plate but one of that series, where "the long history of a mis-spent life is compressed into the countenance as plainly as the series of plates before had told it. There is no consciousness of the presence of spectators, in or out of the picture, but grief kept to a man's self, a face retiring from notice, with the shame which great anguish sometimes brings with it,— a final leave taken of hope — the coming on of vacancy and stupefaction — a beginning alienation of mind looking like tranquillity. Here is matter for the mind of the beholder to feed on for the hour together — matter to feed and fertilise the mind." This is not a fanciful criticism: all that Lamb describes of that face, is *there*, and anybody may see, who has an educated eye, and clear perceptions of humanity behind it. Lamb also alludes to the kneeling female in the Bedlam scene of the same series; to the "sad endings of the Harlot and the Rake," in their respective "Progresses;" to the "heart-bleeding intreaties for forgiveness of the adulterous wife," in the last scene but one of "Marriage à la Mode," and to the

sweetly soothing face of the wife which seems "to allay and ventilate the feverish, irritated feelings of her poor, poverty-distracted mate," in the print of the "Distressed Poet," who has a tattered map of the mines of Peru stuck against his squalid walls. Quite equal, also, to any of these, and yet more clearly to the bent of our argument, is the "image of natural love" displayed in the aged woman in Plate V. of "Industry and Idleness," "who is clinging with the fondness of hope not quite extinguished, to her brutal vice-hardened child, whom she is accompanying to the ship which is to bear him away from his native soil: in whose shocking face every trace of the human countenance seems obliterated, and a brute beast's to be left instead, shocking and repulsive to all but her who watched over it in its cradle before it was so sadly altered, and feels it must belong to her while a pulse, by the vindictive laws of his country, shall be suffered to continue to beat in it."

How analogous, how closely applicable all this is to the finest parts of the works of Mr. Dickens, must be sufficiently apparent. It may be hardly necessary to mention any corresponding scenes in particular; one or two, however, rise too forcibly to the mind to be repressed. In "Oliver Twist"—the work which is most full of crimes and atrocities and the lowest characters, of all its author's productions, in which these things are by no means scarce—there are some of the deepest touches of pathos, and of

the purest tenderness, not exceeded by any author who ever lived—simply because they grow out of the very ground of our common humanity, and being Nature at her best, are in themselves perfect, by universal laws. Of this kind is the scene where the poor sweet-hearted consumptive child, who is weeding the garden before anybody else has risen, climbs up the gate, and puts his little arms through to clasp Oliver round the neck, and kiss him "a good bye," as he is running away from his wretched apprenticeship.* They had both been beaten and starved in the workhouse together, and with the little child's "Good-bye, dear—God bless you!" went the full-throated memory of all the tears they had shed together, and the present consciousness that they should never see each other again. When little Oliver opened the door at night to run away, the stars looked farther off than he had ever seen them before. The world seemed widening to the poor outcast boy. Does not the reader also recollect the terrible scene of the funeral of the pauper in the same work? They, and everything about them, are so squalid and filthy that they look like "rats in a drain." She died of starvation—her husband, and her old mother are sitting beside the body. "There was neither fire nor candle, when she died. She died in the dark—in the dark. She couldn't even see her

* Oliver Twist, vol. i. c. 7.

children's faces, though we heard her gasping out their names!" O, ye scions of a refined age—readers of the scrupulous taste, who, here and there, in apprehensive circles, exclaim upon Dickens as a low writer, and a lover of low scenes—look at this passage—find out *how* low it is—and rise up from the contemplation chastened, purified—wiser, because sorrow-softened and better men through the enlargement of sympathies. One more, though it can only be alluded to, as it requires a full knowledge of the characters and circumstances to be enough appreciated. It is the terrific scene where the girl Nancy is murdered by the brutal housebreaker Sykes.* The whole thing is done in the most uncompromising manner—a more ferocious and ghastly deed was never perpetrated; but what words are those which burst from the beseeching heart and soul of the victim? At this moment, with murder glaring above her, all the sweetness of a nature, which the extreme corrosion of an utterly vicious life had not been able to obliterate from the last recesses of her being, gushes out, and endeavouring to lay her head upon the bosom of her ruffian paramour, she calls upon him to leave their bad courses—to lead a new life—and to have faith in God's mercy! While uttering which, she finds no mercy from man, and is destroyed.

* Oliver Twist, vol. iii. c. 45.

Any one who would rightly—that is, philosophically as well as pleasantly—estimate the genius of Mr. Dickens, should first read his works fairly through, and then read the Essays by Charles Lamb, and by Hazlitt,* on the genius of Hogarth; or if the hesitating reader in question feels a preliminary distaste for anything which displays low vices without the high sauce of aristocracy to disguise the real repulsiveness (a feeling natural enough, by the way) then let him reverse the process, and begin with the Essays.

It is observable that neither Hogarth nor Dickens ever portray a mere sentimental character, nor a morbid one. Perhaps the only exception in all Mr. Dickens' works is his character of Monks which is a failure—a weak villain, whose pretended power is badly suggested by black scowlings and melodramatic night-wanderings in a dark cloak, and mouths-full of extravagant curses of devils, and pale-faced frothings at the mouth, and fits of convulsion. That the subtle old Fagin should have stood in any awe of him is incredible: even the worthy old gentleman, Mr. Brownlow, is too many for him, and the stronger character of the two. In fact, this Monks is a pretender, and genuine characters only suit the hand of our author. A merely respectable and amiable commonplace character is also pretty certain to present

* On Marriage à la Mode.

rather a wearisome, prosy appearance in the scenes of Hogarth and of Dickens. They are only admirable, and in their true element, when dealing with characters full of unscrupulous life, of genial humour, or of depravities and follies; or with characters of tragic force and heart-felt pathos.

Both have been accused of a predilection for the lower classes of society, from inability to portray those of the upper classes. Now, the predilection being admitted, the reason of this is chiefly attributable to the fact that there is little if any humour or genuine wit in the upper classes, where all *gusto* of that kind is polished away; and also to the fact that both of them have a direct moral purpose in view, viz., a desire to ameliorate the condition of the poorer classes by showing what society has made of them, or allowed them to become—and to continue.

Neither of these great artists ever concentrate the interest upon any one great character, nor even upon two or three, but while their principals are always highly finished, and sufficiently prominent on important occasions, they are nevertheless often used as centres of attraction, or as a means for progressively introducing numerous other characters which cross them at every turn, and circle them continually with a buzzing world of outward vitality.

There is a profusion and prodigality of character

in the works of these two artists. A man, woman, or child, cannot buy a morsel of pickled salmon, look at his shoe, or bring in a mug of ale; a solitary object cannot pass on the other side of the way; a boy cannot take a bite at a turnip or hold a horse; a by-stander cannot answer the simplest question; a dog cannot fall into a doze; a bird cannot whet his bill; a pony cannot have a peculiar nose, nor a pig one ear, but out peeps the first germ of "a character." Nor does the ruling tendency and seed-filled hand stop with such as these; for inanimate objects become endowed with consciousness and purpose, and mingle appropriately in the back-ground of the scene. Sometimes they even act as principals, and efficient ones too, either for merriment and light comedy, genial beauty and sweetness, or the most squalid pantomimists of the "heavy line of business." Lamb particularly notices what he terms "the dumb rhetoric of the scenery—for tables, and chairs, and joint-stools in Hogarth are living and significant things," and Hazlitt very finely remarks on the drunken appearance of the houses in "Gin Lane," which "seem reeling and tumbling about in all directions, as if possessed with the frenzy of the scene." All this is equally apparent in the works of Dickens. He not only animates furniture, and stocks and stones, or even the wind, with human purposes, but often gives them an individual rather

than a merely generalized character. To his perceptions, old deserted broken-windowed houses grow crazed with "staring each other out of countenance," and crook-backed chimney-pots in cowls turn slowly round with witch-like mutter and sad whispering moan, to cast a hollow spell upon the scene. The interior of the house of the miser Gride,* where there stands an "old grim clock, whose iron heart beats heavily within his dusty case," and where the tottering old clothes-presses "slink away from the sight" into their melancholy murky corners—is a good instance of this; and yet equally so is the description of the house† in which the Kenwigses, Newman Noggs, and Crowl, have their abode, where the parlour of one of them is, perhaps, "a thought dirtier" (no substantial difference being possible to the eye, the room is left to its own self-consciousness) than any of its neighbours, and in front of which "the fowls who peck about the kennels, jerk their bodies hither and thither with a gait which none but town fowls are ever seen to adopt." Nor can we forget the neighbourhood of "Todgers's," where "strange, solitary pumps were found hiding themselves, for the most part, in blind alleys, and keeping company with fire-ladders."‡ All these things are tho-

* Nicholas Nickleby, vol. ii. chap. 50.

† Ibid. vol. ii. chap. 14. ‡ Martin Chuzzlewit, chap. 9.

roughly characteristic of the condition and eccentricity of the inmates, and of the whole street, even as the beadle's pocket-book "which, like himself, was corpulent." A gloomy building, with chambers in it, up a yard, where it had so little business to be, "that one could scarcely help fancying it must have run there when it was a young house, playing at hide-and-seek with other houses, and have forgotten the way out again;"* and the potatoes, which, after Cratchit had blown the fire, "bubbled up, and knocked loudly at the saucepan lid, to be let out, and peeled"†—these are among the innumerable instances to which we have alluded. These descriptions and characteristics are always appropriate; and are not thrown in for the mere sake of fun and farcicality. That they have, at the same time, a marvellous tendency to be very amusing, may cause the sceptic to shake his head at some of these opinions; the pleasurable fact, nevertheless, is in any case quite as well for the author and his readers.

Mr. Dickens' characters, numerous as they are, have each the roundness of individual reality combined with generalization—most of them representing a class. The method by which he accomplishes this, is worth observing, and easily observed, as the process is always the same. He

* Christmas Carol, p. 18. † Ibid. p. 87.

never developes a character from within, but commences by showing how the nature of the individual has *been* developed externally by his whole life in the world. To this effect, he first paints his portrait at full-length; sometimes his dress before his face, and most commonly his dress and demeanour. When he has done this to his satisfaction, he *feels in* the man, and the first words that man utters are the key-note of the character, and of all that he subsequently says and does. The author's hand never wavers, never becomes untrue to his creations. What they promise to be at first (except in the case of Mr. Pickwick, about whom the author evidently half-changed his mind as he proceeded) they continue to the end.

That Mr. Dickens often caricatures, has been said by many people; but if they examined their own minds they would be very likely to find that this opinion chiefly originated, and was supported by certain undoubted caricatures among the illustrations. *Le célèbre Cruishank*— as the French translator of "Nicholas Nickleby" calls him, appears sometimes to have made his sketches without due reference, if any, to the original. These remarks, however, are far from being intended to invalidate the great excellence of many of the illustrations in "Oliver Twist" and "Nicholas Nickleby," and also of those by

Hablott Brown and Cattermole in "Barnaby Rudge" and "Martin Chuzzlewit."

What a collection—what a motley rout—what a crowd—what a conflict for precedence in the mind, as we pause to contemplate these beings with whom Mr. Dickens has over-peopled our literature. Yet there are but few which, all things considered, we should wish to "emigrate." The majority are finished characters—not sketches. Of those which were most worthy of their high finish many instantly arise in person to supersede the pen. Mr. Pecksniff, sit down!—you are not asked to address the chair on behalf of the company. Nor need Sam Weller commence clearing a passage with one hand, and pulling forward Mr. Pickwick with the other: nobody can speak satisfactorily for an assemblage composed of such heterogeneous elements. The cordial welcome which would be so very applicable to Old Fezziwig, John Browdie, Newman Noggs, Tom Pinch, and a hundred others, would fall very unintelligibly on the ear when turning to the face of Ralph Nickleby, Mr. Brass, Jonas Chuzzlewit, and a hundred others. What variety and contrast, yet what truth, in such characters as Oliver Twist and Barnaby Rudge, the Yankee agent Scadder, and Hugh, Mr. Varden and Mr. Brass, Nelly's grandfather, and Mr. Stiggins! Nor should we forget Sykes's dog, Kit's pony, and

Barnaby's raven. But however excellent our author may be in his men, he is equally so with his women. Mrs. Weller, and Mrs. Nickleby, Mrs. Jarley and Miss Montflathers, Mrs. Gamp, the Marchioness, Mrs. Varden, the widow who accused Mr. Pickwick, the sisters Cherry and Merry, and little Nell, and many more, are all acquaintances for life. In his young lady heroines Mr. Dickens is not equally successful. They have a strong tendency to be unromantically dutiful, which in real life, is no doubt "an excellent thing in woman," but it is apt, unless founded upon some truly noble principle, to become uninteresting in fiction. Their sacrifices to duty are generally common-place, conventional, and of very equivocal good, if not quite erroneous. Some of the amiable old gentlemen are also of the description so very agreeable to meet in private life, but who do not greatly advantage the interest of these books, amidst the raciness and vigour of which they hardly form the right sort of contrast. With reference to his female characters, however, who are "better-halves," if his portraits be faithful representations, especially of the middle and lower classes,—and it is greatly to be feared they are but *too* true, in many cases—then we shall discover the alarming amount of shrews, scolds, tartars, and termagants, over whom her Britannic Majesty's liege married subjects male, plea-

santly assume to be "lords and masters." France lifts its shoulders at it, and Germany turns pale.

The materials of which the works under our present consideration are composed, are evidently the product of a frequent way-faring in dark places, and among the most secret haunts where vice and misery hide their heads; this way-faring being undertaken by a most observing eye, and a mind exactly suited to the qualities of its external sight. Many and important may be the individual biographical facts; but if ever it were well said of an author that his "life" was in his books, (and a very full life, too,) this might be said of Mr. Dickens. Amidst the variety of stirring scenes and characters which unavoidably surround every one who has duties to perform among mixed classes of mankind, and amidst the far darker scenes and characters which the bent of his genius caused him to trace out into their main sources and abodes, were the broad masses of his knowledge derived, and the principal faculties of his mind and heart wrought up to their capacious development. When he has not seen it before, he usually goes to see all that can be seen of a thing before he writes about it. To several of the characters he has drawn, objections have often been made, that they were exaggerations, or otherwise not perfectly true to nature. It is a mistake to think them untrue: they are, for the most part, *fac-simile creations*, built up with materials from the

life,' as retained by a most tenacious memory. They are *not* mere realities, but the type and essence of real classes; while the personal and graphic touches render them at the same time individualized. Sometimes, it is true, he draws a mere matter-of-fact common-place reality; and these individuals, like Mrs. Maylie, Mr. Brownlow, Harry Maylie, Mrs. Bedwin, (except when the latter wipes the tears from her eyes, and then wipes her spectacles' eyes by the unconscious force of association,) and several others, are a sort of failure "in a book" where they walk about with a very respectable and rather uncomfortable air.

The delineation of characters constitutes so very much the more prominent and valuable portion of Mr. Dickens' works, that it is extremely difficult to detach them from any view of an entire production. Take away his characters, and the plots of his stories will look meagre and disconnected. He tells a very short story admirably; but he cannot manage one extending through a volume or two. His extended narrative is, in fact, a series of short stories, or pictures of active interest introducing new people, who are brought to bear more or less—scarcely at all, or only atmospherically, sometimes — upon the principals. Perhaps he may not have the faculty of telling a story of prolonged interest; but, in any case, he has done right hitherto not to attempt it by

any concentrating unity of action. Not any of his characters are weighty enough in themselves to stand "the wear and tear" and carry on the accumulating interests of a prolonged narrative. They need adventitious aids and relief; and most ably and abundantly are these supplied.

The immense circulation of Mr. Dickens' works, both at home and abroad, and the undoubted influence they exercise, render it an imperative duty to point out everything in them which seems founded in error, and the moral tendency of which may be in any way and in any degree injurious. We are anxious to display his most striking merits—and every fault worth mentioning. Nor do we believe, when looking at the direct and benevolent aim which characterizes all the author's efforts, that such a proceeding can meet with any other feeling on his part than that of a frank approval, even though he may not in all cases be disposed to admit the validity of the objections.

The main design of Mr. Dickens is for the most part original, and he always has a moral aim in view, tending to effect practical good. The moral tendency of all his works is apparent, if they are regarded in their entireness as pictures of human nature, in which no romantic sympathy is sought to be induced towards what is vicious and evil—but antipathy and alarm at present misery and ultimate consequences—while a genuine heart-felt sympathy is

induced towards all that is essentially good in human nature. This is true of all his works considered under general views; in some of the details, however, the morality becomes doubtful from an undue estimate of conventional duty when brought into collision with the affections and passions. The author always has the purest and best intentions on this score; nevertheless, some of his amiable, virtuous and high-spirited characters break down lamentably, when brought into conflict with society's grave, misleading code on the subject of heart and pocket, or "birth." Thus, Rose Maylie—the beautiful young heroine in "Oliver Twist"—refuses her devoted lover, whom she also loves, merely because she does not know who her parents were, and she is therefore of "doubtful birth,"—and actually persists in her refusal. Nor is this compromise of the strongest and best feelings of nature to mere conventional *doubts*, the only objectionable part of the story; for the act is spoken of as a fine thing in her to do, as inferring a refined feeling for her lover's honour and future satisfaction, though he, the man himself, declares he is satisfied with what she *is*, let her origin have been as doubtful or as certain as it might. Being quite assured of his love, she tells him he "must endeavour to forget her"—that he should think of "how many other hearts he might gain"—that he should make her

the confidante "of some other passion." These are the wretched, aggravating insincerities so often employed in real life. It is not intended that Rose should be regarded as a fool or a coquette, or in any other disadvantageous light; but on the contrary she is said to have "a noble mind," to be "full of intelligence;" and that her characteristic is "self-sacrifice." Here, then, occurs the very equivocal, if not totally erroneous morality; for so far from this act being simply one of "self-sacrifice," the fact is apparent that Rose sacrifices her lover's genuine unadulterated feeling to her overweening estimate of her own importance as a strictly correct-principled young lady in the social sphere. When he leaves the house early in the morning with an aching heart, looking up in vain for a last glimpse, she secretly peeps at him from behind the window curtains! There is too much of this already in the actual world, and it should not be held up for admiration in works of fiction. She makes, finally, a very bad excuse about the duty she owes "to herself," which is, that she, not knowing her origin, and being portionless, should not bring any disgrace upon her lover, and blight his "brilliant prospects;" and very much is also said about the great "triumphs" this young 'squire is to "achieve" in parliament and upwards, by "his great talents, and powerful connections." This only adds nonsense to the young

lady's false morality and prudery; for the young 'squire is one of those ordinary sort of clever sparks, about whose great talents and probable achievements the less that is said the better.*

It has been remarked that our author does not develope his characters from within, but describes them with a master-hand externally, and then leaves them to develope themselves by word and action, which they do most completely. His process is the converse of that of Godwin, who developes solely from within, and whose characters dilate as they advance, and more than carry out the first principles of their internal natures with which we were made acquainted. On the other hand, let any one turn to the description of Rose Maylie when she is first introduced, and then it will be seen that the expected character "breaks down,"—nothing comes of it. Again: it must be admitted that Kate Nickleby is an admirable, high-spirited and very loveable girl; and that Nicholas Nickleby is a very excellent counterpart, and a young man of that sort of thorough-bred mettle, which wins regard and inspires entire confidence. Yet both, undoubtedly fine spirits, get themselves into equivocal positions where their best and strongest feelings are concerned. Kate refuses the hand of Frank Cheeryble, because she is poor and he rich,

* Oliver Twist, chaps. 29, 33, 34.

aud she has received kindness and assistance from his uncles: Nicholas gives up Madeline Bray, for precisely the same reasons, — though in point of value, as human beings, Nicholas and Kate are very superior to the somewhat too real Mr. Frank, and the dutifully uninteresting Miss Madeline, who has consented—the old story of having a selfish father—to marry the miserly dotard, Arthur Gride. Now, each of the parties is well aware of the love of the other, which they sacrifice to a minor moral. If the self-sacrifice of the individual were all that was involved in the question, then indeed gratitude and other secondary causes might perhaps be fairly allowed to influence the painful resignation of a higher feeling; but where the happiness of the beloved object—and this is the main point of the question —is involved, then the sacrifice becomes, to say the least of it, an equivocal morality—a certain evil, with some very doubtful good. At the head of the chapter which displays the quadruple sacrifice made by Nicholas and Kate, are these words—"Wherein Nicholas and his sister forfeit the good opinion of all worldly and prudent people." On the contrary; what they do, is precisely in accordance with the opinion of the worldly and prudent, and would be certain to obtain the usual admiration.

But the author's better genius is not to be thwarted by these half-measures and short-comings, and strict

lines of duty; for the truth of imagination is stronger in him than the prudence of all the world. Out of his own book will we convict him. After Kate has told her brother of her rejection of the man who loved her, (and whom she loved,) on the grounds of her poverty and obligations to his uncle, her brother thus soliloquizes. "What man," thought Nicholas proudly, "would not be sufficiently rewarded for any sacrifice of fortune, by the possession of such a heart as this, which, but that" (here peeps in the extraneous misgiving) "hearts weigh light, and gold and silver heavy," (but this should not be so with lovers!) "is beyond all praise? Frank has money, and wants no more. More, would not buy him such a treasure as Kate? And yet in unequal marriages the rich party is always supposed to make a great sacrifice, and the other to get a good bargain!" (And again, the misgiving in full force.) "But I am thinking like a lover, or like an ass, which I suppose is pretty nearly the same."* Instead of being an ass, this stumbling lover, who continues to run his head against the truth, rather figures as a moralist *malgré lui.* The vacillations in the above passage are striking. The main truth of the question, however, is yet brought out unalloyed by the good heart of "brother Charles," who says banteringly to his nephew: "How dare you think,

* Nicholas Nickleby, chap. 61.

Frank, that we would have you marry for money, when youth, beauty, and every amiable virtue and excellence were to be had for love?" That is the point; well said, "old true-penny." Addressing Nicholas he thus continues: "Madeline's heart is occupied by you, and worthily and naturally. This fortune is destined to be yours, but you have a greater fortune in her, sir, than you would have in money, were it forty times told."* Surely a sincere passion ought to teach all this to lovers, without waiting for a hint from the "warm" old gentleman of the story?

Yet again, an objection of another kind — for Mr. Dickens has quite enough strength to be dealt with unsparingly. It has been previously said, and the reasons for the opinion have been stated, that "Oliver Twist," the work which is open to most animadversion, has a beneficial moral tendency, and is full of touches of tenderness, and pathos, and of generous actions and emotions.† The objection about to be offered, is on the ground of justice being made vindictive and ferocious, which, be it ever so just, has not a good moral tendency. This is said with reference to the death of a most detestable ruffian — Sykes — and it was important

* Nicholas Nickleby, chap. 63.

† The author's introductory defence to the third edition we have only seen after finishing this essay. It is unanswerable, but ought not to have been needed.

that no sympathy should, by any possibility, be induced towards so brutalized a villain. Such, however, is the case; for the author having taken over-elaborate and extreme pains to prevent it, the "extremes meet." After the brutal murder of the poor girl Nancy, the perpetrator hurries away, he knows not whither, and for days and nights wanders and lurks about fields and lanes, pursued by the most horrible phantoms and imaginings, amidst exhaustion from hunger and fatigue and a constant terror of discovery. Far from making a morbid hero of him, in any degree, or being guilty of the frequent error of late years, that of endeavouring to surround an atrocious villain with various romantic associations, Mr. Dickens has shown the murderer in all his wretchedness, horror, and utter bewilderment consequent on his crime. So far, the moral tendency is perfect. A climax is required; and here the author over-shoots his aim. Perhaps, in reality, no punishment, on earth, could very well be too heavy for such a detestable wretch as Sykes to suffer; but we cannot bear to see so much. The author hunts down the victim, like a wild beast, through mud and mire, and darkness, and squalid ways, with crowds upon crowds, like hell-hounds gnashing and baying at his heels. Round the grim and desolate old edifice, the haunt of crime and desperation, rising out of a deep corrosion of filth, as if it had actually grown

up, like a loathsome thing out of the huge ditch,—round this darksome and hideous abode, in which the murderer has taken his last refuge with thrice-barred doors, the infuriate masses of human beings accumulate, throng upon throng, like surge after surge, all clamouring for his life. Hunted with tenfold more ferocity than ever was fox, or boar, or midnight wolf—having scarce a chance of escape—certain to be torn and trampled amidst his mad, delirious struggles, into a miry death, when caught—our sympathies go with the hunted victim in this his last extremity. It is not "Sykes, the murderer," of whom we think—it is no longer the "criminal" in whose fate we are interested—it is for that one worn and haggard man with all the world against him—that one hunted human creature, with an infuriate host pursuing him, howling beneath for his blood, and striving to get at him, and tear him limb from limb. All his old friends turn away from him—look mutely at him, and aghast — and down below, all round the hideous house, in hideous torch-light boils up the surging sea of a maddened multitude. His throwing up the window, and menacing the crowd below, had a grandeur in it—it rouses the blood—we menace with him—we would cast off from his plunging horse, that man who "showed such fury," and offered money for his blood—from the bridge, that man who incessantly called out that the hunted

victim would escape from the back—and we would have silenced the voice from the broken wall, that screamed away the last chance of a desperate man for his life. In truth, we would fairly have had him escape—whether to die in the black moat below, or alone in some dark and far-off field. We are with this hunted-down human being, brought home to our sympathies by the extremity of his distress; and we are *not* with the howling mass of demons outside. The only human beings we recognize are the victim—and his dog.

If the above feeling be at all shared by general readers, it will then appear that Mr. Dickens has defeated his own aim, and made the criminal an object of sympathy, owing to the vindictive fury with which he is pursued to his destruction, because the author was so anxious to cut him off from *all* sympathy. The over-strained terror of the intended moral, has thus an immoral tendency. It may, perhaps, be argued that as the sympathy only commences at that very point, where the detestable individual is lost sight of, and verges into the generalized impression of a human being in the last degree of distress—there is no sympathy *given* to the *criminal?* The moment he is again thought of as the murderer Sykes, the sympathy vanishes; and therefore no harm is done. This would present very fair grounds for a tough metaphysical contest,

but it is never good to throw the feelings into a puzzle, and we prefer to enter a direct protest against the accumulation of vindictive ferocity with which this criminal is pursued, as tending to defeat the unquestionable moral aim of the author.

Certainly not the highest, but certainly the most prominent characteristic of Mr. Dickens' mind, is his humour. His works furnish a constant commentary on the distinction between wit and humour; for of sheer wit, either in remark or repartee, there is scarcely an instance in any of his volumes, while of humour there is a fullness and *gusto* in every page, which would be searched for in vain to such an extent, among all other authors. It is not meant that there are not several authors, and of the present time, who might equal the best points of humour in any of Mr. Dickens' works, but there is no author who can "keep it up" as he does; no author who can fill page after page with unfailing and irresistible humour, the only "relief" to which, if any, shall be fun, and the exuberance of animal spirits—a surplus vitality like that which makes him, after signing his name to a letter or note, give such a whirl of flourishing, which resembles an immense capering over a thing done, before he is "off" to something else. No other author could have written the whole of Chapter twenty-nine of "Martin Chuzzlewit,"—nor perhaps the last two pages. Frequently,

the humour is combined with the richest irony—as at the funeral of old Anthony Chuzzlewit, where the doctor and the undertaker affect not to know each other. Frequently the humour takes the appearance of burlesque and farce, as when Mr. Bumble the beadle puts on his cocked hat, and dances round the tea-table,—but, when it is recollected that he has been courting the mistress of the place, and has just discovered himself to be an accepted man, and that she has left him alone in the room in the first glow of conscious success, the genuine humour of the proceeding becomes manifest. Sometimes, the humour not only takes the show of mere animal spirits, but may be said to depend solely upon them, and to set the lack of wit at utter defiance, as by absolute challenge. This is often done in the person of Master Charley Bates,* who usually falls into shouts of merriment at nothing in itself laughable; and of John Browdie,† who once nearly choaks himself, displaying a great red face and round eyes, and coughing and stamping about with immoderate laughter — and all for the poorest jokes. The joke is felt to be nothing, yet the effect upon John Browdie is so palpable that it is irresistible to the beholder. In like manner, Mr. Mould‡ palates, and relishes, and repeats, one of the very smallest and driest of jokes, because it has a directly professional application that tickles him;

* See Oliver Twist. † Nicholas Nickleby. ‡ See Martin Chuzzlewit.

and such is his unaffected delight, that at last, witless as it is, the humorous effect is unquestionable. But if such points as these might be equalled by several other authors, there are various scenes in the works of Mr. Dickens, which are peculiar to himself for their fullness of humour, mingled with subtle irony, and knowledge of life and character, and are in their combinations unlike any other author. No other author, of past or present times, so far as can be judged by their productions, could have written several scenes, or chapters, taken entire, as they stand in the works of "Boz." For instance, the whole chapter in which Mr. Mould, the undertaker, is discovered in his domestic relations,* where the very nature of the whole man is brought out by the fulsome palavering gossip of the nurse, Mrs. Gamp, who has been "recommended" by Mr. Mould to nurse a certain sick man, and whose permission she comes to ask that she may go and nurse another sick man all night, and thus receive pay from both. Another nurse, recommended by Mr. Mould, was attending upon the latter sick man by day—and it is therefore evident that she also leaves her charge at night to go probably to do duty elsewhere. Hence it appears that four sick people are neglected during twelve hours out of each twenty-four, so that Mr. Mould has good chances of a funeral or two among

* Martin Chuzzlewit, chap. 25.

them. Nothing of this kind is said—nothing is thrown up to the surface of the scene, except its racy humour—but are not the inferences palpable in their keen irony? The scene where this horrid nurse, Mrs. Gamp, goes to fill her office by the sick bed for the night * is an unexampled mixture of the humorous, the grotesque, the characteristic, and detestable—to say nothing of the practical service of the "warning." Two other scenes occur to the mind, which, for the richness of their humour and character, and the thorough knowledge the author has of "his men," are, in their way, quite unparalleled and unrivalled in literature. We allude to the scenes where the two men who, in their circumstances, and the external character they supported, would have been the last voluntarily to lose those wits which were so very necessary always to be kept "about them," did actually lose the same for a time by getting intoxicated—need it be said that these two men are the methodist preacher Mr. Stiggins, called "the Shepherd;"† and the plausible, smooth-surfaced, self-possessed hypocrite, Mr. Pecksniff ‡—the character which bids fair to be, when the work is finished, the master-piece of all the author's numerous characters, or rivalled only by the more subtle delineation of young Martin Chuzzlewit. If ever

* Martin Chuzzlewit, chap. 25. † The Pickwick Papers.
‡ Martin Chuzzlewit, chap. 9.

the conflicting proverbs, that "liquor disguises a man"—and, that "drunkenness exposes a man" were brought to a final issue in favour of the exposition of nature induced by the latter, here may it be witnessed in those two inimitable scenes. They not only display the secret capacities and the habitual bent of the mind, but may also be regarded as physiological studies. A man of genius, to develope and set forth the noble objects of his soul, need not absolutely possess great physical energies, for his work can wait—whether he be above ground or beneath it; but a charlatan, to succeed, *must* possess a strong physique, for his work cannot wait, and he must reap while he lives, or not at all. In the most humorous and strictly characteristic manner—yet without the least apparent purpose—the physique of the Shepherd, and of Mr. Pecksniff, is displayed in these scenes, and we there discover how much secret strength was necessary to enable them to maintain, at all other times, their bland and unruffled exterior, and to repress and govern so much dangerous "stuff" within them. The grave, oily, most respectable Mr. Pecksniff, after being repeatedly put to bed, yet as repeatedly jumping up again, and appearing at the top of the landing-place in his shirt, discoursing with polite, half-conscious absurdity over the bannisters, gives a finish to his character, such as no other condition of affairs could accomplish, and

no words so exquisitely portray. It is the same man, drunk, who, being sober, had the strength of self-possession—when his house was filled with confusion, and the last man he wished to see that confusion, was at his door—to settle the dangerous parties in different rooms, and putting on a gardening hat, open the door himself with a demure face and a spade in his hand! "The force of humour could no further go."

But if Mr. Dickens does not display anything of what is recognized as sheer wit in his writings, he frequently indulges in irony, and sometimes in sarcasm. To his great credit, these instances are never of a morbid misanthropical kind, and in the shape of tranchant side hits and stabs at human nature; they will almost invariably be found directed against social wrongs, "the insolence of office," against false notions of honour, against mere external respectability, and with a view to defend the poor against injustice and oppression. His favourite method, however, of exposing and attacking wrongs, and "abating nuisances," is through the humorous display of characters actively engrossed with their own objects and designs. With theories, or systems of philosophy, which are not to his mind, he also deals in a similar style of pleasantry. The opening pages of Chapter XIII. of "Oliver Twist," are an admirable instance.

If it be an interesting thing to trace the cause and means of a man's rise to fame, and the various methods by which he mastered obscurity amidst all the crowd struggling for the same narrow door, and fairly won the sympathy, the admiration, and the gold of contemporaneous multitudes,—it is no less curious and interesting to observe the failures of successful men, their miscalculations at the very height of the game, and the redoubled energy and skill with which they recovered their position. Few are perhaps aware that Mr. Dickens once wrote an Opera; not very many perhaps know that he wrote a Farce for the theatre, which was acted; and the great majority of his readers do not at all care to remember that he wrote a "Life of Grimaldi," in two volumes. The opera was set to music very prettily by Hullah, and was produced at the St. James' theatre; but, somehow, it vanished into space; albeit, at dusty old book-stalls, pale-faced near-sighted men, poking over the broken box or tea-chest that usually contains the cheap sweepings of the stock within, avouch that once or twice they have caught a glimpse of the aforesaid lyrics, labelled price three-pence. As for the theatrical piece, it "went off" in a smoke, with Harley wringing his hands at the top of the cloud; and for the "Life of Grimaldi," every-body was disappointed with it, because, although Joseph was certainly in private "no fool," yet as the

only hold he had upon our sympathies was with reference to his merry-makings at Christmas-tide, the public certainly did not expect to find most of that set aside, and in its place a somewhat melancholy narrative hopeless of all joyous result from the first, yet endeavouring to be pleasant "on the wrong side of the mouth." It was like the rehearsal of a pantomime, the poor clown being of course in "plain clothes," and having pains in his limbs, from a fall. It was a sad antithesis to expectation, and all old associations.

Leaving these failures behind him with so light a pace that no one heard him moving off, and never once turning back his head,—which might have attracted the public attention to his ill-luck—our author started forward on his way, as if nothing had happened.

The slowness, and dogged grudging with which the English public are brought to admit of great merit, except in cases where their admiration is suddenly carried off unawares from them, is only to be equalled by the prodigality of disposition towards a favourite once highly established. And this influences all classes, more or less. A recent instance must have caused our author great merriment. At a public dinner a short time since, Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, regretting the absence of his friend Mr. Dickens, paid an appropriate and well-merited com-

pliment to the breadth of surface over which the life, character, and general knowledge contained in his works, extended. The reporter not rightly hearing this, or not attending to it, but probably saying to himself, 'Oh—it 's about Dickens—one can't go wrong,' gave a version of the learned Serjeant's speech in the next morning's paper, to the effect that Mr. Dickens' genius comprised that of all the greatest minds of the time, put together, and that his works represented all their works. The high ideal and imaginative—the improvements in the steam-engine and machinery—all the new discoveries in anatomy, geology, and electricity, with the prize cartoons, and history and philosophy thrown into the bargain,—search from the "Sketches by Boz" to Martin Chuzzlewit inclusive, and you shall find, in some shape or other "properly understood," everything valuable which the world of letters elsewhere contains. The gratuitous gift of this confused accumulation, is only to be equalled by the corresponding gift of "madness," with which our most amusing, and, in his turn, most amused author was obligingly favoured by an absurd report, extensively circulated, some year or two ago.

The true characteristics of Mr. Dickens' mind are strongly and definitively marked—they are objective, and always have a practical tendency. His universality does not extend beyond the verge of the actual

and concrete. The ideal and the elementary are not his region.

Having won trophies over so large a portion of the intellectual and plastic world, Mr. Dickens projected a flight into the ideal hemisphere. Accordingly he gave us Master Humphrey, and his Clock. The design had a sort of German look; but the style in which it opened was precisely that adopted by the American novelist Brockden Brown, (a man of original genius beyond doubt—the author of "Carwin," "Wieland," &c.,) in one of his works especially, we forget which. The introduction, which only bordered upon the ideal, and seemed to be a preliminary softening of our mortal earth, with a view to preparing it for "fine air," was no sooner over than the reader had to commence a second preparation, called an "Introduction to the Giant Chronicles," which was going back to the old style of "Boz," and seemed like giving the matter up at the outset. The "First Night of the Giant Chronicles" settled the business. The real giant, "Boz," could make nothing of the ideal giants—they turned out to be mere Guildhall fellows, pretending to know something beyond the city. The "Clock Case" was a dead failure, so was the "Deaf Gentleman," so was the "Correspondence." Affairs began to look ominous. A brief story of tragic interest was told, and finely. It diverted the attention; but the author was obliged to proceed

with his series, and accordingly he commenced "The Old Curiosity Shop"—a sufficiently vague title, which might lead to anything or nothing—and then we had some fresh failures in the shape of "Correspondence." Now, if the author had been a vain man, or a wrong-headed, purblind egotist, resolved to go on with something unsuitable to his mind, and to insist upon success with all fact and fancy, and nature and art, against him, then it would have been all over with the popularity of the renowned "Boz." Instead of which, the author's good sense, self-knowledge, adroitness, and tact, made him clearly see the true state of the case, and the surest remedy; he accordingly called up to the rescue some old-established favourites, and after introducing Mr. Pickwick to Master Humphrey, and bringing Sam Weller and old Weller into the kitchen beneath the luckless "Clock," he literally undermined his own failure, and blew it up, as soon as he saw the prospect of a clear field before him. It was well done. The wood-cut at the end of the "Old Curiosity Shop," in which Master Humphrey is represented seated in his chair, surrounded by elves, fairies, and grotesque spirits—is all very much in the way of Tieck, and Hoffman, but out of Mr. Dickens' way, and he rapidly abandoned it.

In his delightful little book—a better hearted one never issued from the press—called "A Christmas

Carol" in *prose,* something of the same kind is again attempted, and certainly with success. In his conception, description, and management of the First and Third of the Spirits that visit Scrooge, there are the true elements of the supernatural world. They are "high German" and first-rate. The allegorical description of the Spirit of the Past, is perfect. As for the jolly Giant, he is a modern Goth. The knocker which changes into Marley's dead-alive face, and yet remains a knocker, is taken from Hoffman's "Golden Pot;" but there is abundance of genuine supernaturalism about him which must have been made on the spot.

Our author is conspicuous for his graphic powers. All his descriptions are good, often excellent; sometimes, both for minute truths and general effect, perfect. Humorous descriptions are his forte; and serious description is no less his forte, though he far less often indulges in it. Perhaps it may be said that his *eye* is "worth all his other senses;" at all events, it is never "made the fool" of the other senses—except where it ought to be so (sympathetically) in describing objects seen through the medium of passion. It will presently be shown that this exception constitutes one of the finest elements, if not the finest element of his genius. But the feature in his writings, now under consideration, is the power he possesses of describing things as they actually exist

— in fact, of seeing so much more in a given space and time than people usually do, of copying it down in the words most appropriate to bring it before other minds, and of faithfully recollecting and harmoniously combining his materials. After describing the furniture and decorations of a room—walls—floor, and ceiling—and alluding to two different groupes of people, the author carelessly says: "Observing *all this* in the first comprehensive glance with which a stranger surveys a place that is new to him, &c."* A stranger indeed! It is well, perhaps, for many "interiors" that every stranger who just pops in his head, does not always see quite so much. The reader may also recollect, perhaps, the entrance of Mrs. Gamp into the sick chamber, who, with one glance round, sees the contents of the room, and the prospect of chimney-pots, and gable-ends, and roofs, and gutters, out at the garret window!†

It is not necessary to make any remark on the descriptions given of the dress and other external appearances of the characters introduced by Mr. Dickens, except to say that he considers such descriptions display the character in all its individuality. He does not distinctly say this, but his opinion incidentally slips out in speaking of the Massachussets' Asylum for the Blind.‡ He re-

* Nicholas Nickleby, vol. i. chap. 32. † Martin Chuzzlewit, chap. 25.
‡ American Notes, vol. i. chap. 3.

sembles Sir Walter Scott in this respect, and like Scott, he also frequently gives the portrait minutely. Some of the faces of his men are drawn with the tangible truth of Hans Holbein, such as the Yankee agent Scadder,* the man with two different profiles —one alive and teeming with palpable rascality, the other like a dead wall with a thief behind it. There is more done, however, in some instances than merely giving the portrait—its expression is given at a critical moment; and, in one instance, the reflection of expression from face to face is displayed under the influence of strong excitement, in which the very physiology of family characteristics boils up through and above all differences of nature and circumstance, shines out with a light at once noble yet devilish, and culminates on a common centre of passion. The scene is between Ralph, Nicholas, and Kate Nickleby.†

In describing local scenery, Mr. Dickens is generally faithful and minute; his inventions of scenery are rather (as such things should be) transcripts from memory carefully combined. His "American Notes" have not been valued so much as they deserve, on account of certain manifest exaggerations of travelling scenes (not of sea-faring, for that is all true enough,) and also because the public

* Martin Chuzzlewit, chap. 21.

† Nicholas Nickleby, chap. 54.

wanted something more, and something less, they hardly knew what. But if his excellent and humanely-purposed accounts of public institutions do not obtain for these volumes a sufficient regard, the descriptions they contain of American "locations," and of wood-scenery, particularly in canal-travelling, ought to give them a permanent position as historical landscape records to be referred to in future years when the face of that great country has become changed. Any one who has travelled in those parts can hardly fail to recognize the perfect truth of these descriptions, many of which must have been copied down on the spot.

Amidst the various sets of somewhat elaborate memoranda, notes, and outlines, from which this essay is written, there are few more numerous in references than our slip of paper headed with "Happy Words and Graphic Phrases." As when the avaricious dotage of the toothless old miser, Arthur Gride, is cheered with a prospect of success, to which he returns no other answer than "a *cackle* of great delight;" as when the placards of a company of strolling players, are issued "with letters afflicted with every possible variety of *spinal deformity*;" as when the watery currents "toyed and sported" with the drowned body of Quilp, "now bruising it against the slimy piles, now hiding it in mud or long rank grass, now dragging it heavily over rough stones

and gravel, now feigning to yield it to its own element, and in the same action *luring* it away," &c.; as when a set of coffin-lids standing upright, cast their shadows on the wall "like high-shouldered ghosts with their hands in their pockets;" and an old harpsichord in a dusty corner, is described by "its *jingling anatomy*;" as when Mr. Pecksniff, overcome with wine, speaks of the vain endeavour to keep down his feelings, "for the more he presses the bolster upon them, the more they look round the corner!" Or, when it is said of one of those wooden figure-heads that adorn ships' bows, and timber yards, that it was "*thrusting* itself forward with that excessively *wide-awake* aspect, and air of somewhat obtrusive politeness by which figure-heads are usually characterized." All these, moreover, tend to establish the statement previously made as to the predominating feature of characterization displayed throughout Mr. Dickens' works, and the consequent difficulty of separating this feature from almost every other, so inwoven is it into the texture of the whole. The first two paragraphs of the chapter which opens with the description of the interior of the house of the miser Gride, for graphic truth and originality, as applied to the endowment of old furniture with the very avariciousness and personal character of their owner, yet without the loss of their own identity as old furniture, or any assistance from preter-

natural fancies, are probably without parallel in the literature of this or any other country.*

Mr. Dickens' style is especially the graphic and humorous, by means of which he continually exhibits the most trifling and common-place things in a new and amusing light. Owing to the station in life of the majority of his characters, a colloquial dialect of the respective classes is almost unavoidable; even his narrative style partakes of the same familiarity, and is like telling the listener "all about it;" but no one else ever had the same power of using an abundance of "slang" of all kinds, without offence, and carrying it off, as well as rendering it amusing by the comedy, or tragic force of the scene, and by its unaffected appropriateness to the utterers. Sometimes, however, certain of these licences are not so fitly taken by the author, where they accidentally slip out of the dialogue into the narrative; nor can good taste approve of the title-page of "Martin Chuzzlewit," which reminds one of some of the old quack and conjuring treatises, servant-maids' dream-books, or marvellous tracts of bigotted biography and old-fashioned rhodomontade. It is unworthy of the work, which, so far as can be judged at present, will probably be its author's most highly-finished production.

The "Sketches by Boz" are, for the most part,

* Nicholas Nickleby, chap. 51.

rather poor affairs. Except the "Visit to Newgate" —the "Hospital Patient," and the "Death of the Drunkard"—especially the death-bed scene in the second, and the delirium and suicide of the last, which are fearfully truthful and impressive—there are few of the papers which are above mediocrity.

That far higher qualities have been discovered in him, by certain students of literature, not only in England, but on the continent of Europe, than his "Sketches," and the "Pickwick Papers" contain, can hardly admit of doubt; nevertheless a few remarks may be offered in addition to what has previously been said, to explain more popularly the grounds which men of intellect have for "the faith that is in them" with regard to the genius of Mr. Dickens.

So far as a single epithet can convey an impression of the operation of his genius, it may be said that Mr. Dickens is an *instinctive* writer. His best things are suddenly revealed to him; he does not search for them in his mind; they come to him; they break suddenly upon him, or drop out of his pen. He does not tax his brain, he transcribes what he finds writing itself there. This is the peculiar prerogative of a true creative genius. His instincts manifest themselves in many subtle ways, both seriously and humorously. Thus; when Lord Verisopht, the foolish young nobleman who has wasted his life in all sorts of utter folly, is on his way to

fight a duel which is fated to close his career, it is said that "the fields, trees, gardens, hedges, everything looked very beautiful; the young man scarcely seemed to have noticed them before, though he had passed the same objects a thousand times."* The whole of the passage should be carefully read: it is deeply pathetic. It is as though Nature, whom the foolish young lord had forgotten during his whole life, had gently touched his heart, reminding him that he should take one look at her, thus to refine and sweeten with her balmy tenderness and truth the last brief interval of his existence. It should also be remarked that the author calls him "the young man" this once only—previously he was always a scion of nobility—now he is simplified for the grave. No hard study and head-work, no skill in art and writing, can produce such things as these. They are the result of a fine instinct identifying itself with given characters, circumstances, and elementary principles. When Sykes hurries homeward with the determination of destroying the girl, it is said that he "never once turned his head to the right or left, or raised his eyes to the sky, or lowered them to the ground, but *looked straight before him*;"† and this will be found to be the invariable characteristic of every fierce physical resolution in advancing towards its object. Before he

* Nicholas Nickleby, chap. 50.

† Oliver Twist, chap. 46.

commits the murder he extinguishes the candle though it is scarce daybreak, but says that "there is light enough for what he has *got to do*"—the tone of expression suggesting a vague notion of some excuse to himself for his contemplated ferocity, as if it were a sort of duty. Allusion may also be made to his not daring to turn his back towards the dead body all the time he remained in the room; to the circumstances attending his flight, and to the conduct of his dog. The same fine instinct is displayed, in a different form, in the circumstances preceding the suicide of Ralph Nickleby;—the hideous churchyard for the poor—his recollections of having been one of a jury, long before, on the body of a man who had cut his throat, and his looking through the iron railings "wondering which might be his grave;" the set of drunken fellows who were passing, one of whom danced, at which a few bystanders laughed, and one of them looking round in Ralph's face, he, as if galvanized, echoed the laugh, and when they were gone recollected that the suicide whose grave he had looked for, had been merry when last seen before he had committed the act.* And again, the same instinct manifests itself in a perfectly different mode in the deeply affecting conduct of the old grandfather—deep beyond tears—on the death of Nelly, and also after her death;† and with equal

* Nicholas Nickleby, chap. 62. † The Old Curiosity Shop, chaps. 71, 72.

truth and subtlety when Dennis, the hangman, has received sentence of death*—every word he utters is with the sense of strangulation upon him, and a frantic struggling against visible fate. He "knows by himself" what thoughts are now passing in the mind of the man who is to execute him. Of a humorous kind the instances are too abundant even to be referred to; one or two only shall be noticed. After Mr. Mould, the undertaker, has discoursed about certain prospective funerals, and looked out of his window into a churchyard "with an artist's eye to the graves," while sipping a tumbler of punch, he covers his head with a silk handkerchief, and takes *a little nap*†—an expressive comment upon an undertaker's composed and pleasant idea of death. When "poor Tom Pinch" has lighted old Martin Chuzzlewit with a lanthorn across the fields at night, he immediately blows out the candle for his own return ‡—prompted, as it seems, by a sensation of no sort of consequence being attached to himself, and unconsciously influenced by the strictly frugal habits of his employer. In speaking to Jonas of a little surprise he contemplated for his daughters (who evidently knew all about it,) Mr. Pecksniff lowers his voice, and treads on tip-toe, though his daughters are two miles

* Barnaby Rudge, chap. 76.

† Martin Chuzzlewit, chap. 25.

‡ Ibid. chap. 24.

off;* his sensation actually coinciding with an imaginative impulse derived from his own lie. One more: the unfortunate Smike having been caught by Squeers, and brought to the house of Mr. Snawley, who is at supper, the latter declares "it is clear that there has been a Providence in it,"—and this he utters casting his eyes down with an air of humility, and elevating his fork with a bit of lobster on the top of it, towards the ceiling. "Providence is against him, no doubt," replied Mr. Squeers, scratching his nose. "Of course, that was to be expected." Mr. Snawley, then addressing the detestable Mr. Squeers, makes the moral reflection that "Hard-heartedness and evil doing will never prosper." "Never was such a thing known," rejoined Squeers, taking a roll of notes from his pocket-book, to see that they were all safe.† Let no lover of fun suppose that the ludicrous circumstances of this dialogue are merely introduced to produce a laugh at the graphic absurdity: they mark the hypocrisy and the total absence of any real sense of Providence, in these two scoundrels, while the last action of Squeers betrays a sudden instinctive consciousness, if not of his own villainy, at least of the consequences which sometimes ensue on such doings as his.

Now, it may be said, that Mr. Dickens does not perhaps intend all this, which has been regarded as

* Martin Chuzzlewit, chap. 20. † Nicholas Nickleby, chap. 38.

the workings of a fine instinctive faculty—that such things are accidental—that he is not conscious of such inferences himself, nor troubles his head about them, and that the critic is playing the part of Mr. Curdle, who wrote a long treatise to inquire whether the nurse's husband in Romeo and Juliet, really *was* "a merry man," which seemed doubtful from the fact of the one slender joke recorded of him. Possibly; and if Mr. Dickens can write so suggestively by accident, "happy man be his dole." The trial scene of the Jew Fagin, is full of these wonderful "accidents." * Howbeit, there are the fiction-facts; and there the critic's comments; the reader can settle the question to his own mind. It may, however, be observed that if such inferences were the mere invention or fancy of the present essayist, similar things would occur to him in reading the works of other novelists and writers of fiction. But they seldom do, except with the greatest writers, and with no others of the present time, in an equal degree. The very names given to so many characters—names which express the nature or peculiarity of the individual, and which are at once original, eccentric, humorous, and truthful,—would serve to prove that such a number of happy "hits," could never have been made unintentionally. But this unconsciousness of the operation of their own genius, which was

* See also, "Les Trois Jours d'un Condamné," by Victor Hugo.

perhaps the case with nearly all the great writers of former times, hardly applies now with any force in our age of constant analysis and critical disquisition. During the actual moments of composition a great inventive genius will of course be forgetful of himself, and *how* he works, and *where* it all comes from; but to succeed in these days, with any chance of posterity, an author must know well what he is about. Some of the details of his execution may fairly bear more appropriate inferences than a man of genius literally intended; will continually do so; but all such things in Mr. Dickens, and in other novelists and dramatists, are the spontaneous offspring of a mind that has started upon a well-understood course, and a nervous system that *lives in* the characters and scenes of imaginative creation.

Under the head of "instinctive writing" must also be classed those subtle intuitions which are the peculiar, and perhaps, exclusive prerogative of a fine inventive genius. He describes (in "Oliver Twist") very remarkable phenomena sometimes attending sleep as well as stupor, when objects of the external senses partially obtain admission, and are perceived by the dreaming mind; representing a condition of knowledge without power, as though a foot were on either shore of the worlds of vision and reality, the soul being conscious of both, and even of its own anomalous state. This, however, he may have ex-

perienced; as, in like manner, what he describes (in the "American Notes") of the peculiar delirium and forlorn brain-wandering sometimes induced by prolonged sea-sickness. His portraiture of a heart-breaking twilight condition of fatuity, brought on by age, and want, and misery, are stronger cases in point, yet these he might have witnessed. But he can have no actual experience either in his own person or that of others, of what emotions and thoughts are busy in the innermost recesses of the body and soul of the perpetrator of the worst crimes,—of the man condemned for death, of the suicide, and of those who are actually in the last struggle. Yet everybody of ordinary imagination and sensibility has felt the vital truth of these descriptions, the home-stinging whisper, or loud cry, of Nature within his being, as he read them.

Of the tragic power, the pathos, and tenderness contained in various parts of Mr. Dickens' works, many examples have already been given, nor can space be afforded for more than a brief reference to one or two more. Nothing can be more striking than the last scenes in the lives of Hugh, of Dennis, and of Barnaby Rudge, each so different, yet so true to the character,—the first so suggestive of barbaric greatness and sad waste of energies—the second so overwhelming in physical apprehensions, and revolting in abject wretchedness—the last so full of motley

melancholy, resigned yet hopeless, a sweetness above despair, a brain for once blessed by an imbecility that places him beyond the cruel world, and meekly smiling at all its "capital" laws. The trial scene of Fagin is a master-piece of tragic genius. There are many little incidents in our author's works of the same kind as the following:—When the poor, maltreated, half-starved boys all run away from the Yorkshire school, "some were found crying under hedges, and in such places, frightened at the solitude. One had a dead bird in a little cage; he had wandered nearly twenty miles, and when his poor favourite died, lost courage, and lay down beside him." During the riots described in Barnaby Rudge (chapter 77,)—"One young man was hanged in Bishopsgate-street, whose aged grey-headed father waited for him at the gallows, kissed him at its foot when he arrived, and sat there on the ground till they took him down. They would have given him the body of his child; but he had no hearse, no coffin, nothing to remove it in, being too poor; and walked meekly away beside the cart that took it back to prison, trying as he went to touch its lifeless hand." Words—few as they are—of heart-breaking humanity, the only comment upon which must be a silent, scalding tear. The death of Nelly, and her burial, are well-known scenes, of deep pathetic beauty.

A curious circumstance is observable in a great

portion of the scenes last mentioned, which it *is* possible may have been the result of harmonious accident, and the author not even subsequently fully conscious of it. It is that they are written in blank verse, of irregular metre and rhythms, which Southey and Shelley, and some other poets have occasionally adopted. The passage properly divided into lines, will stand thus,—

NELLY'S FUNERAL.

And now the bell—the bell
She had so often heard by night and day,
And listened to with solemn pleasure,
E'en as a living voice—
Rung its remorseless toll for her,
So young, so beautiful, so good.

Decrepit age, and vigorous life,
And blooming youth, and helpless infancy,
Poured forth—on crutches, in the pride of strength
And health, in the full blush
Of promise, the mere dawn of life—
To gather round her tomb. Old men were there,
Whose eyes were dim
And senses failing—
Grandames, who might have died ten years ago,
And still been old—the deaf, the blind, the lame,
The palsied,
The living dead in many shapes and forms,
To see the closing of this early grave.
What was the death it would shut in,
To that which still could crawl and creep above it!

Along the crowded path they bore her now;
Pure as the new-fallen snow
That covered it; whose day on earth
Had been as fleeting.
Under that porch, where she had sat when Heaven
In mercy brought her to that peaceful spot,
She passed again, and the old church
Received her in its quiet shade.

Throughout the whole of the above only two unimportant words have been omitted,—*in* and *its;* "grandames" has been substituted for "grandmothers, and "e'en" for "almost." All that remains is exactly as in the original, not a single word transposed, and the punctuation the same to a comma. The brief homily that concludes the funeral is profoundly beautiful.

Oh! it is hard to take to heart
The lesson that such deaths will teach,
But let no man reject it,
For it is one that all must learn,
And is a mighty, universal Truth.
When Death strikes down the innocent and young,
For every fragile form from which he lets
The parting spirit free,
A hundred virtues rise,
In shapes of mercy, charity, and love,
To walk the world and bless it.
Of every tear
That sorrowing mortals shed on such green graves,
Some good is born, some gentler nature comes.

Not a word of the original is changed in the

above quotation, which is worthy of the best passages in Wordsworth, and thus, meeting on the common ground of a deeply truthful sentiment, the two most unlike men in the literature of the country are brought into the closest approximation. Something of a similar kind of versification in the prose may be discovered in Chap. 77 of "Barnaby Rudge." The following is from the concluding paragraph of "Nicholas Nickleby:"—

> The grass was green above the dead boy's grave,
> Trodden by feet so small and light,
> That not a daisy drooped its head
> Beneath their pressure.
> Through all the spring and summer time
> Garlands of fresh flowers, wreathed by infant hands,
> Rested upon the stone.

Such are the "kindly admixtures," as Charles Lamb calls the union of serious and comic characters and scenes in Hogarth, which are to be found in abundance throughout the works of Mr. Dickens. Following up his remark, Lamb adds that "in the drama of real life no such thing as pure tragedy is to be found; but merriment and infelicity, ponderous crime, and feather-like variety," &c. Surely this is not sound as a theory of art? Pure tragedy is to be found in the drama of real life, if nothing else intervenes at the moment, or the principals are all too absorbed and *abstracted* to be conscious of the

presence of anything else. Pure tragedy, therefore, exists in nature, as well as in art; and ideal art obtains it by stopping short of all interference, and keeping the separation absolute. Another point of art of a different kind is in the fit and harmonious admixture of the opposite elements of tragedy and comedy, and a fine artist never confounds the two, or brings them into abrupt and offensive contrast and revulsion. Intermediate shades and gradations are always given. It is one of Mr. Dickens' greatest merits, that notwithstanding his excessive love of the humorous, he never admits any pleasantries into a tragic scene, nor suffers a levity to run mischievously across the current of any deep emotion in a way to injure its just appreciation. In this respect he is the direct converse of Thomas Ingoldsby, who not only mixes jests inextricably with horrors, but makes fun of the very horrors themselves—not ghost stories, nor burlesques, are here meant, but murderous deaths of men, women, and children. Rare subjects for fun!

A pure feeling of religion, and a noble spirit of Christian charity and active benevolence is apparent in all appropriate places throughout the works of Charles Dickens. After describing the poor girl born blind, deaf, and dumb, whom he saw in the Massachussets' Asylum, at Boston, and about whose course of life, education, and present state he excites

so lively an interest, he concludes with a striking passage.* The same principles and feelings are also apparent in various incidental, and perhaps scarcely conscious side-hits and humorous touches which occur in the progress of the narratives or dialogues,—as, for instance, where Sykes' dog is shown to entertain so very Christian-like an un-Christianity in his behaviour, and the sentiments he entertains with regard to other dogs. It is amusing to see how all this puzzles the Italian translator, who says the passage must have a hidden meaning—"un senso nascoso."

As a general summary of the result of Mr. Dickens' works, it might be said that they contain a larger number of faithful pictures and records of the middle and lower classes of England of the present period, than can be found in any other modern works; and that while they communicate very varied, and frequently very squalid and hideous knowledge concerning the lower, and the most depraved classes, and without the least compromise of the true state of men and things, the author nevertheless manages so skilfully that they may be read from beginning to end without a single offence to true and unaffected delicacy. Moreover, they tend on the whole to bring the poor into the fairest position for obtaining the sympathy of the rich and powerful, by displaying the goodness and fortitude often found amidst want

* American Notes, vol. i. pp. 103, 104.

and wretchedness, together with the intervals of joyousness and comic humour. As Hazlitt says of Hogarth, that "he doubles the quantity of our experience," so may it be said of Dickens, with the additional circumstance, that all the knowledge of "life" which he communicates is so tempered and leavened, that it will never assist a single reader to become a heartless misanthrope, nor a scheming "man of the world."

At the commencement of this paper a comparison was instituted between Hogarth and Mr. Dickens. Dropping that comparison, the examination of the works of the latter has continued down to this point by dealing solely with the works themselves, as much so as if no others of the same or of similar class existed. In a philosophical and elementary sense comparisons are always inevitable to the formation of our judgments; not so, the bad system of always lugging in such extraneous and too often "odious" assistances. But we think we have fairly earned the right of doing something of this kind in conclusion; and perhaps it may be expected of us.*

Mr. Dickens has often been compared with Scott, with Fielding, and Le Sage. He is not at all like Scott, whose materials are derived from histories and

* The above paragraph is verbatim as in the first edition. The following remark refers to the present article:—"This method of comparison is easy criticism, *but never before was it carried to such extremity!*"—NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE, May 1844. There has been some forty pages without any such comparisons.

traditions, as shown by his elaborate notes to every chapter—all worked up with consummate skill. Mr. Dickens has no notes derived from books or records, but from a most retentive memory and subtle associations; and all this he works up by the aid of an inventive genius, and by genuine impulse rather than art. Scott and Fielding are great designers of plot and narrative. Dickens evidently works upon no plan; he has a leading idea, but no design at all. He knows well what he is going to *do* in the main, but how he will do this, it is quite clear he leaves to the impulse of composition. He moves in no fixed course, but takes the round of nature as it comes. He imposes no restraints upon himself as to method or map; his genius cannot bear the curb, but goes dancing along the high road, and bolts *ad libitum.* (This ought not to be admired.) He is like Scott and Fielding in the fleshly solidity, costume, and completeness of his external portraitures. He is also like Fielding in some of his best internal portraitures. Scott does very little in that way. The Preface to the French translation of "Nicholas Nickleby" says of it "Ce livre est un panorama mouvant de toutes les classes de la société Anglaise; un critique fine et piquante de tous les ridicules, une vaste composition à la manière de 'Gil Blas,' où mille personnages divers se meuvent et posent devant le lecteur." This is quite true as to the

method of working out their ideas; but with this moving panorama of divers classes, and the excellent delineation of character, all resemblance ceases. The tendency of the great and too delightful work of Le Sage, is to give us a contempt for our species, and to show that dishonesty and cunning are the best policy. The power over the grotesque and the pathetic, displayed by Cervantes, added to his love of beauty in pastoral scenes, and to his deep-heartedness, offers a far closer and more worthy comparison; although we are aware that our author is not so poetical and elevated as Cervantes, nor would he have been likely to delineate such a character as Don Quixote—who comprises in himself the *true* flower and consummation of the chivalrous spirit, with its utter absurdity and end. But except in this one character, these two authors have a close affinity in genius. Mr. Dickens is not like Gay. "The Beggar's Opera" was written to be *sung*; it is a poetical satire; its heroes are idealized; their vice and theft do not shock in the least; and people nod their heads to the *burthen* of "Tyburn Tree," because it is only a song and satire which hangs upon it. The gallows of the "Beggar's Opera" was not meant for poor, base, thieves; it was a flight far above the rags of "beggars"—it was meant for "better company!" Not so with the thieves and fine gentlemen of Mr. Dickens. The men and

things he deals with he means actually as he calls them; the only exception to their reality is that they represent classes; the best of them are never mechanical matter-of-fact portraits. It is this closeness to reality, so that what he describes has the same effect upon the internal sense as *thinking of reality*, that renders Dickens very like De Foe; not omitting the power over the pathetic and grotesque also possessed by both. Yet with all these resemblances, Mr. Dickens is an original inventor, and has various peculiarities, the entire effect of which renders his works, as wholes, unlike those of any other writer.

Mr. Dickens is manifestly the product of his age. He is a genuine emanation from its aggregate and entire spirit. He is not an imitator of any one. He mixes extensively in society, and continually. Few public meetings in a benevolent cause are without him. He speaks effectively—humorously, at first, and then seriously to the point. His reputation, and all the works we have discussed, are the extraordinary product of only eight years. Popularity and success, which injure so many men in head and heart, have improved him in all respects. His influence upon his age is extensive—pleasurable, instructive, healthy, reformatory. If his "Christmas Carol" were printed in letters of gold, there would be no inscriptions which would give a more salutary hint to the gold of a country.

Mr. Dickens is, in private, very much what might be expected from his works,—by no means an invariable coincidence. He talks much or little according to his sympathies. His conversation is genial. He hates argument; in fact, he is unable to argue—a common case with impulsive characters who see the whole truth, and feel it crowding and struggling at once for immediate utterance. He never talks for effect, but for the truth or for the fun of the thing. He tells a story admirably, and generally with humorous exaggerations. His sympathies are of the broadest, and his literary tastes appreciate all excellence. He is a great admirer of the poetry of Tennyson. Mr. Dickens has singular personal activity, and is fond of games of practical skill. He is also a great walker, and very much given to dancing Sir Roger de Coverley. In private, the general impression of him is that of a first-rate practical intellect, with no affectation about him. Seldom, if ever, has any man been more beloved by contemporary authors, and by the public of his time. His portrait in the present work is extremely like him.

Translations are regularly made in Germany of all Mr. Dickens' works. They are quite as popular there as with us. The high reputation of the Germans for their faithfulness and general excellence as translators, is well supported in some of these versions; and in others that reputation is perilled.

Bad abbreviations, in which graphic or humorous descriptions are omitted, and the characteristics of dialogue unnecessarily avoided, are far from commendable. No one could expect that the Italian "Oliviero Twist," of Giambatista Baseggio, published in Milan, would be, in all respects, far better than one of the most popular versions of that work in Leipzig. But such is the fact. Some of the French translations are very good, particularly the "Nicolas Nickleby" of E. de la Bédollierre, which is admirably done. Mr. Dickens also "lives" in Dutch, and some of his works are, we believe, translated into Russian.

Very truly Yours
Southwood Smith

LORD ASHLEY

AND

DR. SOUTHWOOD SMITH.

"And ye, my Lordés, with your alliaùnce,
And other faithful people that there be,
Trust I to God, shall quench all this noisaùnce,
And set this lande in high prosperitie."

CHAUCER.

"To plunge into the infection of hospitals; to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain; to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, and to attend to the neglected."

BURKE.

"Trace the forms
Of atoms moving with incessant change
Their elemental round; behold the seeds
Of being, and the energy of life
Kindling the mass with ever-active flame;
Then to the secrets of the working mind
Attentive turn."

AKENSIDE.

"Yet much remains
To conquer still: peace hath her victories
No less renown'd than war."

MILTON.

LORD ASHLEY

AND

DR. SOUTHWOOD SMITH.

THE spirit of the philosophy of antiquity offers a striking contrast to that of the present age in the tendency of the latter to diffuse itself among the people. In the whole range of scientific or demonstrable knowledge which has been grasped by human intelligence, we have now nothing approaching to the old Esoteric and Exoteric doctrine. With results at least as brilliant as those which have distinguished any former age, the instruments of induction and experiment continue to be used to extend the boundaries of knowledge; but that which no former age has witnessed is the energy which is now put forth to make the doctrines of science known and to teach the masses how to apply them to their advantage. The men at present in possession of the key of know-

ledge, value it chiefly as it enables them to unlock treasures for universal diffusion, and estimate their own claim to distinction and honour by the measure in which they have enriched the world. This spirit is strongly exemplified in the writings of Dr. Southwood Smith, and the course of his public life. By nature and education he seems to have been formed rather for the retirement and contemplation of the study, than the active business of the world. The bent of his mind led him at an unusually early age to the investigation of the range of subjects that relate more or less directly to intellectual and moral philosophy; and, as not unfrequently happens, the efforts of those around him to give to his pursuits a widely different direction only increased his love for these studies.

Having determined on the practice of medicine as a profession, Dr. Southwood Smith found in the sciences which now demanded his attention, and still more in the structure and functions of organized beings, studies congenial to his taste, and for which his previous intellectual pursuits and habits had prepared him. The contemplation of the wonderful processes which constitute life, the exquisite mechanism, as far as that mechanism can be traced, by which they are performed, the surprising adjustments and harmonies by which in a creature like man such diverse and opposite actions are brought

into relation with each other and made to work in subserviency and co-operation, and the Divine object of all—the communication of sensation and intelligence as the inlets and instruments of happiness, afforded the highest satisfaction to his mind. But this beautiful world, into whose intimate workings his eye now searched, presented itself to his view as a demonstration that the Creative Power is infinite in goodness, and seemed to afford, as if from the essential elements and profoundest depths of nature, a proof of His love. Under these impressions, he wrote, in 1814, during the intervals of his college studies, the "Divine Government," a work which at once brought him into notice and established his reputation as an original and eloquent writer. It has now gone through many editions, and has been widely circulated, and read with the deepest interest by persons of all classes and creeds; there is nothing sectarian in it; dealing only with great and universal principles, it comprehends humanity and in some respects indeed the whole sensitive and organic creation. The style is singularly lucid; its tone is earnest, rising frequently into strains of touching and pathetic eloquence; a heartfelt conviction of the truth of every thought that is put into words breathes throughout the whole, and a buoyant and youthful spirit pervades it, imparting to it a charm which so

rivets the attention of the reader as to render him in many instances unable to put down the book till finished, as if he had been engaged in an exciting novel. Had the work been written at a maturer age, some of this charm must have vanished, and given place to a deeper consciousness of the woe and pain that mingle with the joys of the present state. But as it is, it has been no unimportant instrument in the hands of those among whom it has chanced to fall, in keeping distinctly before the view the greater happiness, as an end, to the attainment of which the direct and only means must often be *pain*. Many instances are on record of the solace it has communicated to the mourner, and the hope it has inspired in the mind when on the brink of despair. While divines of the church have read and expressed their approbation of it, it has attracted the attention of some of the most distinguished poets of the day: Byron and Moore have recorded their admiration of it, and it appears to have been the constant companion of Crabbe, and to have soothed and brightened his last moments.

After the completion of his medical terms, Dr. Southwood Smith spent several years in the practice of his profession at a provincial town in the west of England, near his place of birth, and in the midst of a small but highly cultivated and affectionate circle of friends, devoting himself with unabated ardour to

his favourite studies. On his removal to London, he attached himself to one of the great metropolitan hospitals, that he might enlarge his experience in his profession. He was soon appointed physician to the Eastern Dispensary, and in a few years afterwards, to the London Fever Hospital. Called upon by the latter appointment to treat on so large a scale one of the most formidable diseases which the physician has to encounter, he applied himself to its study with a zeal not to be abated by two attacks of the malady in his own person, so severe that his life on each occasion was despaired of. The result of several years' laborious investigation is given in his "Treatise on Fever," which was at once pronounced to be "one of the most able of the philosophical works that have aided the advancement of the science of medicine during the last half century;" and its reputation has risen with time. It has had a wide circulation on the continent, over India and in America, in the medical schools of which it has become a text-book, while in this country high medical authority has pronounced it to be "the best work on fever that ever flowed from the pen of physician in any age or country."

Dr. Southwood Smith assisted in the formation of the Westminster Review, and wrote the article on "Education" in the first number. For many years he was a regular contributor, and it was here that

his paper on the state of the Anatomical Schools first appeared, which attracted so much attention that it was re-printed in form of a pamphlet, under the title of "The Use of the Dead to the Living." In this form it passed through several editions, and a copy was sent to every member of both houses of Parliament. The evils that must necessarily result to the country by withholding from the medical profession the means of obtaining anatomical and physiological knowledge were so clearly pointed out in this pamphlet, and the perils inseparable from the permission of such a class as the resurrection-men, (the most horrible results of which were soon afterwards actually realised,) so forcibly depicted, while at the same time a remedy adequate to meet the difficulties of the case was suggested and explained, that the Legislature was induced to take up the subject, and after appointing a Committee of Inquiry, to pass the existing law, which has put an effectual stop to the trade of body-snatching and the horrible crime of Burking: but, unfortunately, from a defect in the act, the anatomical schools are often placed, though quite unnecessarily, in a state of considerable embarrassment.

Dr. Smith laboured with equal earnestness, but less success, to obtain a revision of the present regulations concerning Quarantine, which he regards as unworthy of a country that has made any progress

in science, having their origin in ignorance and superstition worthy of the middle ages; aiming at an object which is altogether chimerical, and which, if it had any real existence, would be just as much beyond human power as the control of the force and direction of the winds. Yet these regulations are still allowed grievously to embarrass commerce, at the cost of hundreds of thousands of pounds annually.

The articles on "Physiology and Medicine" in the early numbers of the Penny Cyclopædia are from the pen of this author, and the success of the treatise on "Animal Physiology," written at the request of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, suggested the idea of treating this subject in a still more elaborate and comprehensive manner, and led to the publication of the "Philosophy of Health." The first words of the introduction to this work thus express the comprehensive nature of the subject which it embraces:—

"The object of the present work is to give a brief and plain account of the structure and functions of the Body, chiefly with reference to health and disease. This is intended to be introductory to an account of the constitution of the Mind, chiefly with reference to the development and direction of its powers."

The two volumes already published, aim at establishing a series of general rules for health, (the word "health" being applied in its widest sense,) by popu-

larly explaining the nature of the *substances* of which the physical part of man is compounded; describing the various *structures* and *organs* of the body, and the different functions they perform; and deducing thence the laws which the creature is enjoined by the principles of its creation to obey. This is merely the basis of a higher philosophy, which rising from the physical, shall, in regular sequence, proceed to the mental, trace their mutual relation and dependence, and endeavour to deduce from the exposition of the nature of each—as far as their nature can be comprehended by mortal intelligence—the rules for the utmost development and progression of both.

The first volume comprises a most interesting view of life in all organized bodies, commencing from an imperceptible germ, and ascending from the lichen on the rock, to man himself. The distinction between the two great divisions of organized life, between that which only grows—the organic, and that which not only grows, but moves and feels—the animal superadded to the organic—is traced with the hand of a master. Equally masterly is the rapid view of the means adopted to render voluntary motion possible; the complication of structure requisite to that one faculty; the apparatus constructed to produce sensation; the elevation of every faculty down to the lowest, by the addition of each higher faculty; the indispensable necessity and uses

of pain not only to health, but to life itself; and the indication of the processes by which nature trains the mind to perceive and think. The concluding passage of this portion of the work is one of remarkable power, in which a general view is exhibited of the physiological progress of a human being, from its first appearance in the embryo state, until the final extinction of life, and the subjection of the inanimate body to the material laws which are to decompose it. Expositions of the functions of circulation, digestion, and nutrition follow, equally characterized by fullness, clearness, and conciseness.

The style of this work is distinguished by terseness and simplicity; it would be difficult to find a useless word, and very few epithets are employed, as though the number and variety of ideas to be imparted rendered condensation essential: in the arrangement there is great precision, subject after subject arising gradually and naturally. Few technical terms are employed, and a full explanation is given to those which are introduced. A perfect command of the subject is evinced throughout; and its exposition is at once profound and simple, calculated alike to instruct the ignorant, and by the striking nature of the descriptions and the novelty of their applications, to interest even those to whom the facts are not new. Much of the matter contained in these volumes is original, and even that

which is taken out of the common treasury of science is disposed in a new manner, and exhibited in new relations of great interest and importance. Scattered phenomena which might be culled out of various works on Anatomy, Physiology, and Mental Philosophy, are here brought together and systematized; displayed as a series, traced from their germs, and followed onwards to their highest manifestations; arranged so as to show their relation to one another, and their influence one on the other, thence deducing the means of developing the united powers towards their utmost point of progression.

Many felicitous instances of scientific generalization and of eloquent description and appeal might be referred to in exemplification. It has been well said by a philosophical reviewer, that the "Natural History of Death, as a composition, has much of that singular and melancholy beauty wherewith a painter of genius would invest the personification of mortality." The following appeal to mothers has been compared to the fervid eloquence of Rousseau, which aroused women to a sense of the physical obligations of the maternal character; but here the earnest call is for mental and moral exertion:—

"I appeal to every woman whose eye may rest on these pages. I ask of you, what has ever been done for you to enable you to understand the physical and mental constitution of that human nature, the care of which is imposed on you? In what part of the course of your

education was instruction of this kind introduced? Over how large a portion of your education did it extend? Who were your teachers? What have you profited by their lessons? What progress have you made in the acquisition of the requisite information? Were you at this moment to undertake the guidance of a new-born infant, to health, knowledge, goodness, and happiness, how would you set about the task? How would you regulate the influence of external agents upon its delicate, tender, and highly irritable organs, in such a manner as to obtain from them healthful stimulation, and avoid destructive excitement? What natural and moral objects would you select as the best adapted to exercise and develope its opening faculties? What feelings would you check, and what cherish? How would you excite aims; how would you apply motives? How would you avail yourself of pleasure as a final end, or as the means to some further end? And how would you deal with the no less formidable instrument of pain? What is your own physical, intellectual, and moral state, as especially fitting you for this office? What is the measure of your own self-control, without a large portion of which no human being ever yet exerted over the infant mind any considerable influence for good?"

This earnest passage at once serves to give an idea of the style of the work and to explain one of its chief aims; and with it the present short account of the "Philosophy of Health" must conclude, but not before a hope has been expressed that an undertaking so important and so well begun, will not much longer be left unfinished.

Dr. Southwood Smith was the friend and physician of Bentham. The venerable and unaffected philanthropist, fully appreciating the importance of anatomical science, and lamenting the prejudice

against dissection, gave his own body to Dr. Smith, charging him to devote it to the ordinary purposes of science. His friend fulfilled his desire, and delivered the first lecture over the body—with a clear and unfaltering voice, but with a face as white as that of the dead philosopher before him; alive, so cheerful and serene—serene for ever now, and nothing more. The lecture was delivered on the 9th of June, 1832, in the Webb-street School of Anatomy. Dr. Smith availed himself of the occasion to give a view of the fundamental principles of Bentham's philosophy, and an account of his last moments. Most of the particular friends and disciples of the deceased were present on the occasion, and his biographer has made this lecture the concluding part of the Memoir which has been prefixed to the uniform Edition of Bentham's works just published. The head and face were preserved by a peculiar process, but the latter being found painful in expression, is covered with a wax mask admirably executed and a correct likeness. The skeleton also was preserved; and the whole clothed in the ordinary dress worn by the philosopher (according to his own express desire) presenting him as nearly as possible as he was while living. Seated smiling in a large mahogany case with a glass front, the homely figure, with its long snow-white hair, broad-brimmed hat, and thick ash-plant

walking-stick, *resides* with Dr. Southwood Smith, and may be seen by any one who takes an interest in the writings and character of Jeremy Bentham.

Lord Ashley, the eldest son of the Earl of Shaftsbury, and member for Dorsetshire, commenced his career in that cause with which his public life has become identified, by undertaking the charge of Mr. Sadler's Factory Bill in the House of Commons. The invention of the spinning-jenny and the power-loom not only altered the whole process of manufacture, but withdrew the operatives from their own dwellings, and collected them in numbers in great buildings called Factories. The invention of machinery was attended with another result; it created a demand for the comparatively inexpensive labour of children, their small fingers being found best adapted to work in combination with it. Very young children, of both sexes, were therefore employed in great numbers, together with adult labourers, and as their servants, and were moreover compelled to work the same number of hours, whether those amounted to twelve, fourteen, or sixteen, or even all night. It was alleged that children of tender ages placed under these unnatural circumstances were grievously and irreparably injured in their physical constitution; that they were cruelly treated by their task-masters; that their morals were early corrupted; that they were growing up in a state of absolute

ignorance. It was universally admitted that the efforts which the Legislature had hitherto made for their protection had failed, and every existing enactment become a dead letter. It was in this state of things that Lord Ashley, in 1833, took charge of Mr. Sadler's Bill, the object of which was to limit the hours of work, of all under eighteen, in Factories, to ten hours daily. This was met by the objection that such a measure must necessarily put the same limit on the labour of adults. A Commission was accordingly appointed; first to ascertain the facts of the case as regarded the children, and, secondly, to enquire whether it would not be practicable to devise a measure for the protection of children without interfering with the liberty of all the operatives. Fifteen Commissioners were appointed and divided into five sections, each consisting of three Commissioners (two civil and one medical) and of these Mr. Thomas Tooke, Mr. Chadwick, and Dr. Southwood Smith, formed the Central Board, to direct the inquiry and report the result. Their report was:—

"That the children employed in all the principal branches of manufacture throughout the kingdom work the same number of hours as the adults; that the effects of such labour, in great numbers of instances, are permanent deterioration of the physical constitution, the production of disease, often wholly irremediable, and the exclusion by means of excessive fatigue from the means of obtaining education. That children at the ages when they suffer these injuries not being

free agents, but let out to hire, their wages being appropriated by their parents, therefore a case is made out for the interference of the legislature in their behalf."

The Factory Act of 1833 was founded on this Report, and four Inspectors and a considerable number of Sub-Inspectors were appointed to enforce obedience to its enactments. The results are highly important.

The existing Act which fixes the youngest age at which children can be employed, and the extent of their hours of labour, and which requires education as a condition of employment, is (unlike its predecessors) obeyed; and although the clause in the Bill prepared by the Commissioners providing for the erection of schools and the payment of teachers, was struck out in the House of Lords on the motion of the Earl of Shaftsbury, Lord Ashley's father, yet with all its imperfections the present Act has led to an amelioration in the treatment and an improvement in the physical condition and moral character of this vast juvenile population, such as was never before effected by an Act of Parliament; while the benefits resulting from it to all parties, the employers no less than the employed, are not only rapidly multiplying and extending, but are becoming more and more the subjects of general acknowledgment and gratulation. There is reason to believe that the

total number employed in factory labour in the United Kingdom is little short of 1,000,000.*

New fields of labour had opened to Lord Ashley at every step of his progress. He had already earned the honourable designation of the general guardian of the children of the poor, as the Lord Chancellor is of the children of the rich. He was satisfied that there were oppressions and sufferings of an aggravated character, and on a large scale, in occupations widely different from those of the factory, and which required investigation the more because the places of work, in which some of the most important of these employments are carried on, are wholly inaccessible to the public. The apprehension inseparable from a mind, at once earnest and diffident, that he should fail to elicit the truth, and to place it so strongly before the public and the legislature, as to command attention and to ensure a remedy for any proved grievance, was strongly marked in the opening of his speech on the 4th of August, 1840, for the ap-

* From a Return furnished by Mr. Saunders, one of the Factory Inspectors, it appears that in his district alone, which is by no means one of the largest, the total number employed in Factory labour is, 106,509. Among these there are 45,958 young persons and children coming under the regulations of the Factory Act. It appears, further, that while there were before the present Act, as far as the Inspector could learn, only two schools in his whole district, at which about 200 children may have been educated, the actual number at present attending schools is 9316. The Factory Act has diminished the number of young children, as operatives, and increased that of adults.

pointment of a "Commission of Inquiry into the employment of Children in Mines, Collieries, and other occupations not regulated by the Factory Acts."

"It is, Sir," said he, "with feelings somewhat akin to despair, that I now rise to bring before the House, the motion of which I have given notice. I cannot but entertain misgivings, that I shall not be able to bring under the attention of the House this subject, which has now occupied so large a portion of my public life, and in which *are concentrated in one hour, the labours of years.* I have long contemplated this effort which I am now making; I had long resolved that, so soon as I could see the Factory children, as it were, safe in harbour, I would undertake a new task. . . . . I am now endeavouring to obtain an inquiry into the actual circumstances and condition of another large part of our juvenile population. . . I wish," continued he, "to reserve and cherish the physical energies of these poor children, and to cultivate and improve their moral part, both of which, be they taken separately or conjointly, are essential to the peace, security, and progress of the empire. . . . It is instructive to observe, how we compel, as it were, vice and misery with one hand, and endeavour to repress them with the other; but the whole course of our manufacturing system tends to these results: you engage children from their earliest and tenderest years in these long, painful, and destructive occupations; when they have approached to manhood, they have out-grown their employments, and they are turned upon the world without moral, without professional education; the business they have learned, avails them nothing; to what can they turn their hands for a maintenance?—the children, for instance, who have been taught to make pins, having reached fourteen or fifteen years of age, are unfit to make pins any longer; to procure an honest livelihood then becomes to them almost impossible; the governors of prisons will tell you, the relieving-officers will tell you, that the vicious resort to plunder and prostitution; the rest sink down into a hopeless pau-

perism. I desire to remove these spectacles of suffering and oppression from the eyes of the poorer classes, or at least to ascertain if we can do so: these things perplex the peaceable, and exasperate the discontented; they have a tendency to render capital odious, for wealth is known to them only by its oppressions; they judge of it by what they see immediately around them; they know but little beyond their own narrow sphere; they do not extend their view over the whole surface of the land, and so perceive and understand the compensating advantages that wealth and property bestow on the community at large. Sir, with so much ignorance on one side, and so much oppression on the other, I have never wondered that perilous errors and bitter hatreds have prevailed; but I have wondered much, and been very thankful that they have prevailed so little."

Lord Ashley concluded by declaring that it was his object to appeal to, and excite public opinion, "for where we cannot legislate," said he, "we may exhort; and laws may fail where example will succeed."

"I must appeal to the Bishops and Ministers of the Church of England, nay, more, to the Ministers of every denomination, to urge on the hearts of their hearers, the mischief and the danger of these covetous and cruel practices; I trust they will not fall short of the zeal and eloquence of a distinguished prelate in a neighbouring country, who, in these beautiful and emphatic words, exhorted his hearers to justice and mercy: — 'Open your eyes,' said the Prince Archbishop Primate of Normandy, 'and behold; parents and masters demand of these young plants to produce fruit in the season of blossoms. By excessive and prolonged labour they exhaust the rising sap, caring but little that they leave them to vegetate and perish on a withered and tottering stem. Poor little children! may the laws hasten to extend their protection over your existence, and *may posterity read with astonishment, on the front of this age, so satisfied*

with itself, that in these days of progress and discovery there was needed an iron law to forbid the murder of children by excessive labour.' . . . My grand object is to bring these children within reach of education. I will say, though possibly I may be charged with cant and hypocrisy, that I have been bold enough to undertake this task, because I must regard the objects of it as beings created, as ourselves, by the same Maker, redeemed by the same Saviour, and destined to the same immortality; and it is, therefore, in this spirit, and with these sentiments, that I now venture to entreat the countenance of this House, and the co-operation of Her Majesty's Ministers; first to investigate, and ultimately to remove, these sad evils, which press so deeply and so extensively on such a large and interesting portion of the human race."

This appeal, distinguished throughout by an earnest simplicity of language, was answered by the cordial support of the Government, and the immediate appointment of a Commission of Inquiry, consisting of a Board of Commissioners, whose office it was to visit the districts and to report thereon. The field of inquiry prescribed by the terms of the Commission, comprehended the mines and collieries of the United Kingdom, and all trades and manufactures whatever in which children work together in numbers, not included under the Factories Regulation Act. The mass of evidence sent up to the Central Board from twenty gentlemen, working day and night, in different parts of the country, with the utmost energy and without intermission for many consecutive months, speaks for itself. Fortunately the Commissioners were men of energy practised in business.

The chairman, Mr. Thomas Tooke, who had held the same situation in the Factory Commission, possessed the confidence of the commercial and manufacturing portion of the country. Mr. Horner and Mr. Saunders, two of the Factory Inspectors, had already spent many years in pursuing investigations analogous to those which were now to be made; and Dr. Southwood Smith was qualified as a physiologist and physician, to appreciate the influence of early labour on the physical and moral condition of children. But the very extent and completeness of the evidence transmitted to the Central Board, would have caused its failure as an instrument of legislation, but for the manner in which it was decided to deal with it. The subject was divided into two parts, Mines and Manufactures. The mines were subdivided into collieries and metallic mines, and the manufactures into the larger branches of industry, such as metal-wares, earthenware, glass-making, lace-making, hosiery, calico-printing, paper-making, weaving, &c.

Those who have closely examined the two small volumes, into which compass are compressed and admirably arranged the main facts contained in the enormous folios, can alone appreciate the amount of labour involved in this undertaking, and will not fail to recognise in the lucid order and condensed style, the hand of Dr. Southwood Smith, on whom this portion of the labours of the commission principally devolved.

He did not shrink from the task, though nearly every minute of the day was absorbed by a fatiguing profession, sustained through the long hours taken from rest and sleep, by the conviction that the usefulness of this work would afford a heart-felt compensation for its labour. The anticipation was fully realized. When the Report on Mines was laid on the table of the House, astonishment and horror were universal. No such outrages on humanity had been discovered since the disclosure of the treatment of Negro slaves. It was truly said that this report resembled a volume of travels in a remote and barbarous country, so little had been previously known of the state of things it described. Dark passages to seams of coal, scarcely thirty inches in height, not larger than a good-sized drain, through which children of both sexes, and of all ages, from seven years old and upwards, toiled for twelve hours daily, and sometimes more, obliged to crawl on "all-fours," dragging after them loaded corves or carts, fastened to their bodies by a belt, a chain passing between the legs;—infants of four, five, and six years old, carried down on their parents' knees to keep the air-doors, sitting in a little niche scooped out in the coal, for twelve hours daily, alone, in total darkness, except when the corves, lighted by their solitary candle, passed along, and some of them during the winter never seeing the light of day, except on Sun-

day;—girls and women hewing coals like men, and by the side of men;—girls and women clothed in nothing more than loose trowsers, and these often in rags, working side-by-side with men in a state of utter nudity;—girls of tender years carrying on their backs along unrailed roads, often over their ankles, and sometimes up to their knees in water, burdens of coal, weighing from ¾ cwt. to 3 cwt., from the bottom of the mine to the bank, up steep ladders, "the height ascended and the distance along the roads added together, exceeding the height of St. Paul's Cathedral;" married women, and women about to become mothers, dragging or bearing on their shoulders similar enormous loads, up to the very moment when forced to leave this "horse-work" to be "drawn up," to give birth to their helpless offspring,—themselves as helpless—at the pit's-mouth, and sometimes even in the pit itself; — boys, of seven and eight years old, bound till the age of twenty-one apprentices to the colliers, receiving until that age, as the reward for their labour, nothing but food, clothing, and lodging, working side-by-side with young men of their own age, free labourers, the latter receiving men's wages;—boys employed at the steam-engines for letting down and drawing up the work-people;—ropes employed for this service obviously and acknowledgedly unsafe;—accidents of a fearful nature constantly occur-

ring;—the most ordinary precautions to guard against danger neglected; a collier's chances of immunity from mortal peril being about equal to those of a soldier on the field of battle—for all this neither the legislature nor the public were at all prepared, nor were they better prepared for the two last conclusions deduced by the Commissioners, as the result of the whole body of evidence, namely:—

"That partly by the severity of the labour and the long hours of work, and partly through the unhealthy state of the place of work, this employment, as at present carried on in all the districts, deteriorates the physical constitution; in the thin-seam mines, more especially, the limbs become crippled and the body distorted; and in general the muscular powers give way, and the work-people are incapable of following their occupation, at an earlier period of life than is common in other branches of industry.—That by the same causes, the seeds of painful and mortal diseases are often sown in childhood and youth; these, slowly but steadily developing themselves, assume a formidable character between the ages of thirty and forty; and each generation of this class of the population is commonly extinct soon after fifty."

When on the 7th of June, 1842, Lord Ashley moved for leave to bring in a Bill, founded on this report, there was an unusually large attendance of members. After expressing his warm acknowledgments to the late administration, "not only for the Commission which they gave, but for the Commissioners whom they appointed, gentlemen who had performed the duties assigned them with un-

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rivalled skill, fidelity and zeal," he proceeded in an elaborate speech, listened to throughout by a silent and deeply attentive House, to detail the most important points of the evidence, presenting such an appalling picture of the physical miseries and the moral deterioration of large classes of the community, that the motion was granted without a dissentient voice. Members on every side vied with each other in cordial assent and sympathy with the measure. The contemporary press echoed the tone; the manner of the speech was deservedly eulogized for its freedom from all sickly sentimentalities, useless recriminations, and philanthropic clap-traps; for the way in which the startling and impressive facts of the case were simply stated and lucidly arranged, and in which each was made to bear upon the nature and necessity of the projected remedy, while blessings were invoked in the name of humanity, on the man by whom this was done, and done so well. "The laurels of party," it was truly declared, "were worthless, compared with the wreath due to this generous enterprize."

Lord Ashley's Bill proposed a total exclusion of girls and women from the labour of mines and collieries; a total prohibition of male children from this labour, no boy being allowed to descend into a mine, for the purpose of performing any kind of work therein, under thirteen years of age; a total

prohibition of apprenticeship to this labour, and a provision that no person, other than a man between twenty-one and fifty years of age, shall have charge of the machinery by which the work-people are let down and drawn up the shafts.

The history of the mutilated progress of this Bill through both Houses, has now to be recorded.

The first point was unanimously acceded to in the Commons; the second was altered by the substitution of the age of ten, for that of thirteen; the concession, however, being neutralized as far as was practicable, by the provision, that no boy under thirteen should work on any two successive days; the third was materially altered by the addition of the word "underground," thus allowing the collier to take apprentices provided he worked them on the surface; the fourth was altered by omitting the limitation to fifty, thus permitting the lives of all who work in mines, to be placed in the hands of aged and decrepid men.

Thus changed, each change, it will be observed, being directly against the interest and safety of the workpeople, the Bill passed the Commons. In the House of Lords, the whole measure was met with a spirit of hostility as unexpected as it was unanimous, and alas! successful. It had been forgotten that the mines and collieries of the kingdom belong, with very few exceptions, to the

great landed proprietors — the same noble lords who had now to decide on the fate of the Bill. For some time it was impossible to get any member of that noble House to take any charge of the business. At length, Lord Devon, from a feeling of shame to which so many had showed themselves insensible, volunteered to do what he could to conduct the Bill through its perilous course. In this noble House, even the prohibition to work female children, and married women, and women about to become mothers, was murmured at, but no member ventured to propose an alteration of this part of the measure. The clause prohibiting apprenticeship was expunged, saving that a provision was retained that no apprenticeship should be contracted under ten years of age, nor for a longer period than eight years. The clause limiting the labour of boys under thirteen to alternate days, was expunged. And the clause regulating the age of the persons that work the machinery for conveying the workpeople up and down the shafts, which the Commons had altered on the one hand so as to permit decrepid men to perform this office, the Lords now altered on the other, so as to entrust it to boys.

Early in the following Session, the Commissioners presented their second Report on Trades and Manufactures, drawn up on the same elaborate plan, written with the same clearness and calmness, and exhibiting in some respects a still more melancholy,

though not so startling a picture of the condition of large classes of our industrial population. It discloses in its full extent the mischief done to the former Bill by the expulsion of the clause prohibiting apprenticeship; for it proves that the oppressions and cruelties perpetrated under this legal sanction in mines and collieries, is even exceeded in some trades and manufactures. The words of the Report relative to this subject, ought to sink deep into the mind and heart of the country. After stating that in some trades, more especially those requiring skilled workmen, apprentices are bound by legal indentures usually at the age of fourteen, and for a term of seven years: the Commissioners continue:—

"But by far the greater number are bound without any prescribed legal forms, and in almost all these cases they are *required to serve their masters, at whatever age they may commence their apprenticeship, until they attain the age of twenty-one*, in some instances in employments in which there is *nothing deserving the name of skill to be acquired*, and in other instances in employments in which they are *taught to make only one particular part of the article manufactured; so that at the end of their servitude they are altogether unable to make any one article of their trade in a complete state.* A large proportion of these apprentices consist of orphans, or are the children of widows, or belong to the poorest families, and frequently are apprenticed by Boards of Guardians. The term of servitude of these apprentices may and sometimes does commence as early as seven years of age, and is often passed under circumstances of great hardship and ill-usage, and under the condition that, during the greater part, if not

the whole, of their term, they receive nothing for their labour beyond food and clothing. This system of apprenticeship is most prevalent in the districts around Wolverhampton, and is most abused by what are called "small masters," persons who are either themselves journeymen, or who, if working on their own account, work with their apprentices. In these districts it is the practice among some of the employers to engage the services of children by a simple written agreement, on the breach of which the defaulter is liable to be committed to gaol, and in fact often is so without regard to age."

The Report on Wolverhampton states, that "within the last four years five hundred and eighty-four males and females, all under age, have been committed to Stafford jail for breach of contract." The following passage concerning the treatment of the children, completes the picture :—

"In the cases in which the children are the servants of the workmen, and under their sole control, the master apparently knowing nothing about their treatment, and certainly taking no charge of it, they are almost always roughly, very often harshly, and sometimes cruelly used; and in the districts around Wolverhampton in particular, the treatment of them is oppressive and brutal to the last degree."

Wolverhampton, it will be remembered, is the centre of the iron manufactures in South Staffordshire, and the words of this Report in their simple conciseness, lay bare a state of things which, that it should exist *at this day*, just as if no Commission had been established, and no facts made known to the public, in the centre of a country which calls itself

civilized, is an outrage to humanity. The descriptions of this district exhibit scenes of actual misery among the children, far surpassing the inventions of fiction. Here, in the busy workshops, the Assistant-Commissioner saw the poor apprentice boys at their daily labour; their anxious faces, looking three times their age, on deformed and stunted bodies, showing no trace of the beauty and gladness of childhood or youth; their thin hands and long fingers toiling at the vice for twelve, fourteen, sixteen, sometimes more hours out of the twenty-four; yet with all their toil, clothed in rags, shivering with cold, half-starved or fed on offal, beaten, kicked, abused, struck with locks, bars, hammers, or other heavy tools, burnt with showers of sparks from red-hot irons, pulled by the hair and ears till the blood ran down, and in vain imploring for mercy;—and all this is going on *now*.*

Why should it go on? Apprenticeship is not an order of Nature. It is an arrangement, good in itself, made by the law, and the law should therefore regulate it beneficently. The necessity of interfering between parents and children has been admitted, and in some degree acted upon in the factories, mines, and collieries. It is equally necessary in trades and

* Reports on Wolverhampton, and other districts, on the Employment of Children and Young Persons in the Iron Trades, &c., of South Staffordshire, and the neighbouring parts of Worcestershire and Shropshire, by R. H. Horne.

manufactures; and much more is it necessary to interfere between masters and apprentices. The natural instinct has even still some power. The mothers do carry their over-toiled children to their beds when they are too tired to crawl to them,—but no one cares for the wretched apprentice. He may lie down and die when his "long day's work" is done, and his master can get another, and a sovereign, besides, at the workhouse.

It is difficult to make an abridgment of the concise and graphic descriptions given in these Reports of the physical and moral condition of the persons employed in the various branches of industry included in the Inquiry; and it is the less necessary, because the means of information are placed within the reach of all; an octavo volume * having been published by direction of the Government, at the desire of the House of Commons, containing verbatim the most important portions of the Reports. The individuals composing these classes are to be numbered not by thousands, but by millions; yet what is the weighed, the solemn verdict given by this Commission as to their moral condition? Every word has been deeply considered—and should so be

* "Physical and Moral Condition of the Children and Young Persons employed in Mines and Manufactures. Illustrated by extracts from the Reports of the Commissioners."—London: Published for her Majesty's Stationery Office, by J. W. Parker, West Strand. 1843.

read. The Commissioners say, in their general conclusions:—

"That the parents, urged by poverty or improvidence, generally seek employment for the children as soon as they can earn the lowest amount of wages; paying but little regard to the probable injury of their children's health by early labour, and still less regard to the certain injury of their minds by early removal from school, or even by the total neglect of their education; seldom, when questioned, expressing any desire for the regulation of the hours of work, with a view to the protection and welfare of their children, but constantly expressing the greatest apprehension lest any legislative restriction should deprive them of the profits of their children's labour; the natural parental instinct to provide, during childhood, for the child's subsistence, being, in great numbers of instances, wholly extinguished, and the order of nature even reversed—the children supporting, instead of being supported by, their parents.

"That the means of instruction are so grievously defective that in all the districts great numbers of children are growing up without any religious, moral, or intellectual training; nothing being done to train them to habits of order, sobriety, honesty, and forethought, or even to restrain them from vice and crime.

"That there is not a single district in which the means of instruction are adequate to the wants of the people, while in some it is insufficient for the education of one-third of the population. That as a natural consequence of this neglect, and of the possession of unrestrained liberty at an early age, when few are capable of self-government, great numbers of these children and young persons acquire in childhood and youth habits which utterly destroy their future health, usefulness, and happiness."

The details forming the basis of these general statements,—which are cold abstractions, necessarily incapable of presenting the living action and pas-

sion of the countless individuals from whom they are derived, — exhibit a degree of wide-spread ignorance, vice, and suffering, for the disclosure of which the country was wholly unprepared. For this national moral evil there is no remedy but a national education; and the presentation of the Report was followed, on the part of Lord Ashley, by a motion for "A Moral and Religious Education of the Working Classes." He sustained his motion by a speech, in which, after expressing his heart-felt thanks to the Commissioners for "an exercise of talent and vigour never surpassed by any public servants," he gave a comprehensive, massive, and most impressive summary of the results of their labours. Few who were in the House on that night will ever forget the effect produced when, urging on his audience to consider the rapid progress of time, and the appalling rapidity with which a child of nine years of age, abandoned to himself, and to companions like himself, is added to the ranks of viciousness, misery, and disorder in manhood, he turned from the Speaker, and looking round on those of his own order, exclaimed — "You call these poor people improvident and immoral, and so they are; but that improvidence and immorality are the results of our neglect, and, in some measure, of our example. Declare this night that you will enter on a novel

and a better course—that you will seek their temporal through their eternal welfare—and the blessing of God will rest upon your endeavours; and, perhaps, the oldest among you may live to enjoy for himself and for his children the opening day of the immortal, because the moral glories of the British Empire."

This appeal was met on the part of the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Sir James Graham, by the answer that he had matured a plan which might be regarded as the first effort of Government to introduce a national system of education. There were unquestionably elements of good in the education clauses, particularly as they were altered in the course of debate, and they might have formed the basis of institutions expanding and improving by experience, until they were put in harmony with the feelings, and became adequate to the wants of the people; but, unfortunately, whatever may have been the real intentions of the Minister, the announcement of his plan had the effect of exciting in a violent degree the sectarian animosities of the people; and after having arrayed from one end of the kingdom to another in desperate conflict Churchman against Dissenter, and Dissenter against Churchman, and different sections of each against all the rest, terminated, not only in the loss of any measure for Education, but in the defeat of the amendment of the Factory Act, to which the Minis-

ter had attached his scheme of National Education. Consequently, the evils resulting from ignorance, remain as before. Government subsequently announced, on the 6th of February, the intention of limiting the labour of children, under thirteen, to six hours daily. The legislation which ensued is well known.

But although the opportunity of making a national provision for education has for the present been lost, yet the exposure of the total inadequacy of existing Institutions for the intellectual and moral training of the people, has not been without a useful result. Within the space of a few months after the publication of the reports of the "Children's Employment Commission," and immediately after the failure of the Government plan of education, the friends of the Established Church raised in voluntary contributions an educational fund amounting to nearly 200,000*l.*; and one denomination of Dissenters (the Independents) at their first meeting, subscribed towards a similar fund upwards of 17,000*l.*, and pledged themselves to use their utmost exertions to increase this sum to 100,000*l.* in the space of five years. The Methodists also have pledged themselves to raise 200,000*l.* in seven years, and found 700 schools; other bodies of Dissenters have followed in the same track; so that the people have already put to shame the "National Grant of 30,000*l.*," the

utmost amount ever yet voted by Parliament for the education of the country—a sum scarcely sufficient to defray the expense of one convict ship, or to maintain for a year one single prison!

The two commissions on which Dr. Southwood Smith has been engaged, have unavoidably turned his mind away from the speculative studies which at one period occupied him more exclusively, and have converted him from a thinker into a worker. Circumstances connected with his profession had long forced upon his observation the wretched state of the dwellings of the poor, and the disease, suffering, and death produced by the noxious exhalations that arise from the unsewered, undrained, and uncleansed localities into which their houses are crowded. "Nature," said he, "with her burning sun, her stilled and pent-up wind, her stagnant and teeming marsh, manufactures plague on a large and fearful scale: poverty in her hut, covered with her rags, surrounded with her filth, striving with all her might to keep out the pure air, and to increase the heat, imitates nature but too successfully; the process and the product are the same, the only difference is in the magnitude of the result." In the year 1837, this result was produced in certain of the metropolitan districts to such an unusual extent as to attract the attention of the Poor Law Commissioners. They requested Drs. Southwood Smith,

Arnott, and Kay to investigate the cause. The districts assigned to Dr. Smith were Whitechapel and Bethnal Green, and he adopted the plan of writing a literal description of what he saw in his tour over these unknown regions. Of the many pictures of squalid wretchedness presented, the following may serve as specimens:—

"An open area of about 700 feet in length, and 300 in breadth; 300 feet of which are covered by stagnant water, winter and summer. In the part thus submerged, there is always a quantity of putrefying animal and vegetable matter, the odour of which at the present moment is most offensive. An open filthy ditch encircles this place. Into this ditch all the . . . . . .
Nothing can be conceived more disgusting than the appearance; and the odour of the effluvia is at this moment most offensive. Lamb's-fields is the fruitful source of fever to the houses which immediately surround it, and to the small streets which branch off from it. Particular houses were pointed out to me from which entire families have been swept away, and from several of the streets fever is never absent."

Of St. John Street, a close and densely populated place, in which malignant fever has prevailed in almost every house, he says—

"In one room which I examined, eight feet by ten and nine feet high, six people live by day and sleep at night; the closeness and stench are almost intolerable. . . Alfred and Beckwith Rows, consist of small buildings divided into two houses, one back, the other front: each house being divided into two tenements, occupied by different families. These habitations are surrounded by a broad open drain, in a filthy condition. Heaps of filth are accumulated in the spaces meant for gardens in front of the houses. . . . I entered

several of the tenements. In one of them, on the ground floor, I found six persons occupying a very small room, two in bed, ill with fever. In the room above this were two more persons in one bed, ill with fever. In this same room a woman was carrying on the process of silk-winding. . . Campden-gardens, the dwellings are small ground-floor houses; each containing two rooms, the largest about seven feet by nine, the smallest barely large enough to admit a small bed; the height about seven feet; in winter these houses are exceedingly damp; the windows are very small; there is no drainage of any kind; it is close upon a marshy district. Often all the members of a family are attacked by fever, and die one after the other."

These descriptions can only be compared to Howard's account of the "State of Prisons," fifty years ago. The jail fever was then a recognized and prevalent disease; it is now only a subject of history. So may the typhus fever of London be fifty years hence. It requires only an enlightened legislature to order, and efficient officers to enforce known remedies.

The impression produced by the entire report, portions of which have now been extracted, led to the motion made by the Bishop of London, in the Session of 1839, for an extension of the inquiry into the state of other towns in the United Kingdom. Early in the following Session (1840), Mr. Slaney obtained a Select Committee of the House of Commons for enquiring into the "Health of Towns." Dr. Southwood Smith was the first witness examined before this Committee, who largely quote his "valuable evidence" in their Report, and refer the

legislature to the important paper which he furnished to them, entitled "Abstract of a Report on the prevalence of Fever in Twenty Metropolitan Unions during the year 1838," which they reprinted in their Appendix.

The urgency of the case had now attracted the notice of Government, and in particular had impressed the noble Secretary of State for the Home Department, the Marquis of Normanby; but like many others, being unable to dismiss a doubt whether there were not some exaggerations in these descriptions, he resolved to verify their correctness by a personal inspection of the districts in question. He accordingly accompanied Dr. Southwood Smith in a visit to Whitechapel and Bethnal Green, and was so deeply affected by what he saw, that he declared his instant conviction, that "so far from any exaggeration having crept into the descriptions which had been given, they had not conveyed to his mind an adequate idea of the truth;" as indeed no words can do. Lord Ashley afterwards performed the same painful round in company with Dr. Smith, and expressed himself in a similar manner.*

In the Session of 1841, Lord Normanby introduced into Parliament his Bill for the "Drainage

* These statements are strictly authentic. They went privately, and unattended, into the most squalid and hideous abodes of filth, and misery, and vice, and might well express themselves strongly in public after what they witnessed.—Ed.

of Buildings;" and in his speech on moving the second reading of the Bill on the 12th of February, he acknowledged the services of Dr. Southwood Smith, in the following terms. "I cannot allude to them," he said, "without at once expressing my obligations to that indefatigably benevolent gentleman for much useful information which I have derived from him, with whom I have had the satisfaction of much personal communication on this subject." The principal provisions of this Bill regarded the drainage of houses, the regulation of the width of lanes and alleys, and the form and conveniences of dwellings. The Bishop of London warmly supported the measure:—"As presiding over the spiritual interests of the metropolis, he felt deeply interested in a Bill which he was satisfied would so materially affect them: and being thoroughly convinced that *the physical condition of the poor was intimately connected with their moral and religious state, and that the two exerted a mutual influence upon each other*, he thankfully hailed the present measure as the first step towards an elevation of that class of the community in the scale of social comfort and order." Lord Ellenborough followed in the same spirit:—"It is idle," said he, "to build churches, to erect school-houses, and to employ clergymen and schoolmasters, if we do no more. Our first object should be to improve the physical

condition of the poor labourer, — to place him in a position in which he can acquire self-respect; above all things to give him a home."

But before this measure had passed, there was a dissolution of Parliament, and a change in the administration. The present ministers, have appointed a Commission of Inquiry into the state of large towns and populous districts, with a view, chiefly, to report on remedies; which remedies, however, notwithstanding the urgency of the case are still delayed. In an extended examination before these Commissioners, Dr. Southwood Smith states that the disease formerly described by him, still continues, and with increasing virulence; that a new epidemic is now ravaging the metropolis, far more extensive and fatal than the preceding; that the poorer classes in their neglected districts, are still exposed to causes of disease, suffering, and death which are peculiar to them, and the malignant influence of which is steady, unceasing, and sure. His words are too terrible to need any comment;—

"The result," he says, "is the same as if twenty or thirty thousand of these people were annually taken out of their wretched dwellings and put to death, the actual fact being that they are allowed to remain in them and die. I am now speaking of what silently, but surely, takes place every year in the metropolis alone, and do not include in this estimate the numbers that perish from these causes in the other great cities, and in the towns and villages of the

kingdom. It has been stated that 'the annual slaughter in England and Wales, from preventible causes, of typhus fever, which attacks persons in the vigour of life, is double the amount of what was suffered by the allied armies in the battle of Waterloo.' This is no exaggerated statement; this great battle against our people is every year fought and won; and yet few take account of it, partly for the very reason that it takes place every year. However appalling the picture presented to the mind by this statement, it may be justly regarded as a literal expression of the truth. I am myself convinced from what I constantly see of the ravages of this disease, that this mode of putting the result does not give an exaggerated expression of it. Indeed the most appalling expression of it would be the mere cold statement of it in figures."

In conclusion, Dr. Smith enforced in earnest language, the consideration that this whole class of evils is remediable; that it does not belong to that description of evil which is mingled with good in the conditions of our being, but to that much larger sum of suffering which is the consequence of our own ignorance and apathy;—

"No Government," said he, "can prevent the existence of poverty; no benevolence can reach the evils of extreme poverty under the circumstances which at present universally accompany it; but there is ground of hope and encouragement in the thought that the most painful and debasing of those circumstances are adventitious, and form no necessary and inevitable part of the condition of that large class of every community which must earn their daily bread by their manual labour. These adventitious circumstances constitute the hardest part of the lot of the poor, and these, as I have just said, are capable of being prevented to a very large extent. The labours of a single individual, I mean those of the illustrious Howard, have at length succeeded in removing exactly similar evils, though somewhat more

concentrated and intense, from our prisons; they are at least equally capable of being removed from the dwelling-houses and work-places of the people. Here there is a field of beneficent labour which falls legitimately within the scope of the legislator, and which is equally within that of the philanthropist, affording a common ground, beyond the arena of party strife, in the culture of which all parties may unite with the absolute certainty that they cannot thus labour without producing some good result, and that the good produced, whatever may be its amount, must be unmixed good."

Dr. Smith is now engaged with Lord Ashley and other influential and benevolent men, in the formation of an Association for improving the dwellings of the industrious classes, by the erection of comfortable, cleanly, well-drained and ventilated houses, to be let to families in sets of rooms, with an ample supply of water on each floor; a fair return for the capital invested being secured. Eleemosynary relief forms no part of the undertaking, as tending to destroy the independence of those whom it is designed to benefit. The association has fully matured its plans, and will endeavour practically to show by model-houses what may be done by combination to lessen the expensiveness of the dwellings of the poor, and to increase their healthfulness and comforts.

Though the sanatory condition of the working classes has been the especial object of Dr. Southwood Smith of late years, he has not forgotten the wants of the middle classes in the season of sickness,

These are not at first sight so obvious; but there are circumstances which have never been sufficiently considered, that place many, whose station in life removes them above the evils of poverty, in a worse condition when overtaken by disease than the poor who can obtain admission into the hospitals. Numbers of the middle classes annually leave their homes and families and flock to London, as to a common centre, to find employment, or to complete their education. Others resort to it from distant parts of the country for medical or surgical advice. Strangers and foreigners constantly visit it. When attacked by disease,—a close and comfortless lodging in a noisy street, with no better attendance than the already over-tasked servant of all work, or a landlady, who begins to dread infection, or the non-payment of her rent,—is the lot of many a delicately minded and sensitive person in the pain of fever or inflammation, with all the desolation of the feeling of absence from home and friends.

Out of a sympathy with such sufferers, arose in Dr. Smith's mind the idea of founding an institution on the principles of the great clubs, arranged with every requisite for a place of abode in sickness, and provided with regular medical officers and nurses; the principle of admission being, as in the case of the clubs, a certain yearly subscription, and a fixed weekly payment during residence in it. Such in-

stitutions are not uncommon on the continent, though, until the present time, none have existed in this country. That originated by Dr. Southwood Smith, under the name of the "Sanatorium," was opened in March, 1842, at Devonshire-place House, in the New Road. The house is well calculated for an experimental attempt, but is not sufficiently large to carry out the purposes which he contemplated. These would extend to suites of rooms, kept at a regular temperature for consumptive cases, and to a separate building for fever cases, which are now totally excluded. It appears only to want greater publicity to attain its full scope of usefulness; but unless supported by the class for whom it is designed it cannot be maintained at all. That such a club is certain to be well supported at some period not far distant, we can plainly see; but the attempt may be premature. Its founder—deriving no personal advantage from the design, but devoting much time and labour to its advancement—has rested its claim to public support simply on the ground, that, as when the middle and higher classes combine to found public schools and colleges, and to build and endow churches, they solicit the contributions of the rich and benevolent because no new thing, however excellent in itself, or however affluent in the means of securing its ultimate independence and prosperity can be set on foot without some

capital; so this institution appeals to the public for assistance, to enable it to mitigate suffering, to shorten the duration of disease, and to save life. The Bank of England, and the large and influential merchants' houses have seen the good of the undertaking, and have contributed largely to promote it; nor should we omit to notice in particular the strenuous exertions of Mr. Thomas Chapman, the Chairman of the Sanatorium Committee.

Amidst his many arduous and apparently endless labours, some words of encouragement should be addressed to Dr. Southwood Smith, who in his private station devotes himself to the diffusion of philosophical truth, and to the instruction of the people in some of the most practically interesting and least understood parts of knowledge. He has described for them, the wonderful structures that form the outward and visible machinery of life, and the still more wonderful results of its action—the processes that constitute the vital functions. He has shown the brighter portion of the height and depth of our human nature in the Sources of Happiness, and has proved that "in the entire range of the sentient creation, without a single exception, the higher the organized structure, the greater the enjoyment to which it ministers and in which it terminates." He has so expounded the philosophy of Pain, as to communicate to the mourning and de-

sponding, heart and hope, and has taught in the noblest sense the uses of adversity. He has still to deduce from the action of physical agents on living structures the laws of health, and to expound the intellectual and moral constitution based on the physical and growing out of it; without a knowledge of which, neither the mother nor the educator can avoid the most pernicious errors, nor ultimately reach their goal. There are minds and hearts that thank him for what he has already accomplished, and that anxiously await the completion of his work.

By his public labours Dr. Smith has awakened the attention of the people at large, and of the legislature, to those physical causes of suffering, disease, and premature death, which, while they afflict the whole community, press with peculiar severity on the poorer classes; and has shown not only that these causes are removable, but the means by which human wisdom and energy may certainly succeed in removing them. And he is peculiarly fitted to render services to the community on this important subject, in consequence of his intimate acquaintance with that dreadful train of diseases which are entailed on humanity by our inattention to removing the causes of the febrile poison.

Lord Ashley is yet young, and few men have before them a more noble, or more successful career. He has proved that he possesses the qualities requi-

site for the performance of the mission to which he has felt the vocation. He is not only intellectual, but possessed of the greatest industry, perseverance, and confidence in his cause, yet diffident of himself from the very depth of his feeling concerning it; not wanting in firmness, yet candid and conciliating, and though earnest even to enthusiasm, tempering and directing the impulses of zeal by a sober and sound judgment. His singleness of purpose, his unquestioned sincerity and honesty, his diligence in collecting facts, his careful sifting, lucid arrangement, and concise and candid exposition of them, and his plain unaffected language and unpretending address, have secured him the deeply respectful attention even of the House of Commons. Sustained in his appeals to that difficult assembly by the profound consciousness that the cause he advocates must engage on its side the sympathies of our common humanity, on which he throws himself with a generous confidence, he often produces the highest results of eloquence. He has already calmed the fears of the capitalists; conciliated the Government; engaged the co-operation of the Legislature; placed under the protection of the Law the children of the factories; placed under the protection of the Law the still more helpless children doomed to the mines and collieries; and to the female children and women, heretofore confined therein, he has said — "You are

free, and shall do the work of beasts in the attitude of beasts, no more." Lord Ashley has still to emancipate apprentices; to obtain a general registration of accidents; to improve the localities and dwellings of the poor; and to give the compensating benefit of education to those whose early years are spent in labour. Because the first attempts to accomplish these great objects have failed, let no evasions, obstacles, delays, discourage him, nor let him—

> "Bate a jot,—
> Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer
> Right onward."

THOMAS INGOLDSBY.

THOMAS INGOLDSBY.

At the conclusion of the majority of the "Ingoldsby Legends," there are verses entitled "Moral;" and this may have been considered by some as a very advantageous addition to productions which have had so extensive a sale, and consequently so extensive an influence upon the minds of particular classes of readers. At the end of the "Legend of a Shirt" there occurs the following,—

MORAL.

"And now for some practical hints from the story
Of Aunt Fan's mishap, which I've thus laid before ye;
For, if *rather too gay*
I can venture to say
A *fine vein of morality* is, in each lay
Of my primitive Muse the distinguishing *trait!*"

2nd Series.

Now, either this is meant to be the fact; or it is not. If meant as a fact, it will be the business

of this paper to display what sort of morality these popular legends contain. But it is not seriously meant!—the author is "only in fun!" Very well; then the sort of fun in which he abounds shall be displayed, together with the "fine vein of morality" which it is to be presumed his Muse does *not* contemplate.

The story of "Nell Cook," (second series) is very clearly and graphically told in rhyme. Nelly is the cook-maid of a portly Canon, a learned man with "a merry eye." Nelly, besides being an excellent cook, is *also* a very comely lass, and the two-fold position she holds in the private establishment of the Canon is sufficiently apparent. In this merry condition of gastronomical affairs there arrives "a lady gay" in a coach and four, whom the Canon presses to his breast as his Niece, gives her his blessing, and kisses her ruby lip. Nelly, the mistress cook, looks askew at this, suspecting they were "a little less than 'kin, and rather more than kind." The gay Lady remains feasting with the Canon in his house, quaffing wine, and singing *Bobbing Joan!* The cook becomes jealous of the clergyman, hates the assumed Niece, and hits upon a plan for discovering the real truth of the relationship. She hides the poker and tongs in the Lady's bed! The said utensils remain there unheeded during six weeks—and the primitive Muse with "a fine vein of morality" says she does not know where the Lady

took her rest all that time! To be brief: Nelly puts poison into her cookery—the bell rings for prayers—the Canon does not come—cannot be found. They search, however, and eventually breaking open the door of a bed-chamber, they find the Canon lying dead upon the bed, and his "Niece" upon the floor, dead also. The black, swollen, livid forms, are described; and the Prior then says "Well! here's a pretty Go!" When the assumed relationship of the parties is mentioned in the "sacred fane" the Sacristan "puts his thumb unto his nose, and spreads his fingers out!" It may now be fairly assumed—with submission—that the Ingoldsby Muse is not serious, but only in fun—in fact that she *is* "rather too gay." To proceed, therefore, with the sequel of this extremely droll story.

The monks, or somebody employed by them, as it seems, seize upon Nelly, and taking up a heavy paving stone near the Canon's door, bury her alive under it. And,—

"I've been told, that moan and groan, and fearful wail and shriek
Came from beneath that paving stone for nearly half a week—
For three long days, and three long nights came forth those sounds of fear;
Then all was o'er—they never more fell on the listening ear!"

Excellent fun!—buried alive!—moans and shrieks for three days and nights!—really this fine vein of morality will be the death of us!

But these things are *not* meant to be pleasant. This is meant to be serious. It certainly looks very like that. In process of years three masons take up the heavy stone, and underneath it, in a sort of dry well, they discover a fleshless skeleton. This also looks very serious. But presently we shall find that horror and levity are exquisitely blended — the "smiles and the tears," as it is beautifully said by some admirers, in extenuation. For "near this fleshless skeleton" there lies a small pitcher, and a "mouldy piece of *kissing*-crust!" Here it may truly be said that Life and Death meet in horrible consummation. It is awfully funny indeed!

Under the head of "Moral," at the end, all morality is evaded by silly common-place exhortations, intended to pass for humour,—such as cautioning "learned Clerks" not to "keep a pretty serving-maid;" and "don't let your Niece sing *Bobbing Joan*," and "don't eat too much pie!"—poisoned pie.

Here is another of these fine veins of a Muse who "poisons in jest." A learned Clerk—the clergy are 'specially favoured with prominently licentious positions in these horrible pleasantries—a learned Clerk comes to visit the wife of Gengulphus in his absence.* They eat, and drink; hold revels; the "spruce young Clerk" finds himself very much at

* See "Gengulphus," 1st Series.

home with "that frolicksome lady;" and then—having placed every thing quite beyond doubt,—the primitive Muse leaves a blank with asterisks, as if she were too delicate to say more. During one of their festivities the husband, Gengulphus, returns from a pilgrimage. The learned Clerk, the spruce young divine, is concealed by the wife in a closet, and she then bestows all manner of fond attentions upon her weary husband, whose "weakened body" is soon overcome by some strong drink, and he falls into a sound sleep. The young divine then comes out of the closet, and assists the wife in murdering Gengulphus, by smothering and suffocation, all of which is related with the utmost levity. After this, they deliberately cut up the corpse.

"So the Clerk and the Wife, they each took a knife,
And the nippers that nipped the loaf-sugar for tea;
With the edges and points they severed the joints
At the clavicle, elbow, hip, ankle, and knee."

Having dismembered him "limb from limb," cutting off his hands at the wrists, by means of the great sugar-nippers, they determine upon throwing his head down the well. Before doing this, however, they cut off his long beard, and stuff it into the cushion of an arm-chair, all of which is laughably told. Then, the Muse does not mean to be serious?—this is not intended as an account of a murder done, or anything beyond a joke. Read the next stanza.

'They contrived to pack up the trunk in a sack,
Which they hid in an osier bed outside the town,
The Clerk bearing arms, legs, and all on his back,
As the late Mr. Greenacre served Mrs. Brown."

Exactly—this is the point at issue—here is the direct, clearly-pronounced comparison with an actual horror, made palpable beyond all dispute. As did Greenacre, in like manner did this spruce young Clerk! No pantomime murders, no Christmas gam bol burlesques—but the real thing is meant to be presented to the imagination. Here is, indeed, a specimen of a Muse being "rather too gay," and upon a very unusual occasion for merriment. Subsequently the story becomes preternatural, after the manner of a monkish legend, variegated with modern vulgarisms, and finally the wife seats herself upon the cushion which contains her murdered husband's beard, and the cushion sticks to her ——! What follows cannot be ventured in prose. The "Moral" at the end, is not very symphonious; but in the usual twaddling style, affecting to be humorous—"married pilgrims don't stay away so long," and "when you *are* coming home, just write and say so;" learned Clerks "stick to your books" — "don't visit a house when the master 's from home" — "shun drinking;" and "gay ladies allow not your *patience* to fail." A fair average specimen of the beautiful concentrated essence of that "fine vein of mo-

rality" which runs, or rather, gutters, through these legends.

In the Legend of Palestine (second series) which is called "The Ingoldsby Penance" (?) the knight, who has gone to the holy wars, leaving his wife at Ingoldsby Hall, intercepts a letter, carried by a little page, from his wife to a paramour with whom she has "perhaps been a little too gay," as the holy Father remarks — whereby we discover what meaning is attached to those words. Sir Ingoldsby gives the little page a kick, which sends him somewhere, and the child is apparently killed on the spot. The paramour turns out to be the revered Prior of Abingdon! Sir Ingoldsby forthwith cuts off the reverend man's head. His account of the style in which he murdered his wife, the lady Alice, must be told in his own words:—

"And away to Ingoldsby Hall I flew!
Dame Alice I found—
She sank on the ground—
I twisted her neck till I twisted it round!
With jibe, and jeer, and mock, and scoff,
I twisted it on—till I twisted it off!"

Serious or comic? Surely this cannot be meant as a laughable thing, but as a dreadful actual revenge? At any rate, however, it *is* laughed at, and the very next couplet institutes a paraphrastic comparison with Humpty Dumpty who sat on a wall!

"All the king's doctors, and all the king's men" sings the primitive Muse—who is sometimes "rather too gay"—"can't put fair Alice's head on *agen!*" It must by this time have become perfectly apparent that the only possible attempt at justification of such writings must be on the score of some assumed merit in the unexampled mixture of the ludicrous and the revolting—the "exquisite turns"—"the playfulness" of these bloody fingers.

The legitimate aim of Art is to produce a pleasurable emotion; and through this medium, in its higher walks, to refine and elevate humanity. The art which has a mere temporary excitement and gratification of the external senses as its sole object, however innocent the means it employs, is of the lowest kind, except one. That one is the excitement of vicious emotions, unredeemed by any sincere passion or purpose, whether justified or self-deluding; and there are no emotions so vicious and so injurious as those which tend to bring the most serious feelings and conditions of human nature into ridicule and contempt; to turn the very body of humanity, "so fearfully and wonderfully made," inside out, by way of a jest, and to represent "battle, murder, and sudden death," not as dreadful things from which we would pray that all mankind might be "delivered," but as the richest sources of drollery and amusement.

There is perhaps no instance of extensive popularity without ability of some kind or other, even when the popularity is of the most temporary description; and that the "Ingoldsby Legends" possess very great talent, of its kind, should never be denied. It will be treated in due course. Their merit is certainly not *wit*, in its usual acceptation; and their humour can scarcely be regarded as legitimate, being continually founded upon trifling with sacred, serious, hideous, or otherwise forbidden subjects, beyond the natural region of the comic muse, and often beyond nature herself.

It will be acknowledged on all sides that the cheapest kind of wit, or humour, or whatever passes current for either, is that which a man finds ready-made. Whoever is the first to appropriate and display a certain quantity of this, in a new, and attractive, or striking shape, is pretty sure of finding a large audience. To appeal to established jokes, and slang sayings, and absurd events and characters, all well known to everybody, is one means of amusing a large and by no means very select class: ghost stories and tales of preternatural wonder, if at all well told, are also sure of exciting a considerable interest, so long as the imagination retains its influence as a powerful faculty of the human mind; and, though last, it is to be feared not least, there is a very large class extremely disposed to be pleased with a clever

dalliance amidst unseemly subjects and stories,—a liquorish temerity which continually approaches the very verge of verbal grossness, and escapes under the insinuation, — in fact, an ingenious "wrapping up" of all manner of unsightly, unsavoury, and unmentionable things.

The quantity of common-place slang in these Legends is a remarkable feature. Very much of it is of a kind that was in vogue in the time of our fathers and grandfathers, such as "Hookey Walker,—apple-pie order—a brace of shakes—cock-sure—meat for his master—raising the wind—smelling a rat—up to snuff—going snacks—little Jack Horner," &c.; and there is no want of the slang of present days, such as—"done brown—a shocking bad hat—like bricks—coming it strong—heavy wet—a regular guy—right as a trivet—a regular turn up—tipping a facer—cobbing and fibbing—tapping the claret—a prime set to!" &c. These choice morsels are all introduced between inverted commas to mark them as quotations; as if this rendered them a jot the more fit to illustrate murderous tales; or as if their dull vulgarity was excusable because it was not original. To use slang with impunity requires great tact, and good taste, and invention, and the finest humour;—inverted commas do nothing.

Many of the tales end with some very fusty old sayings, presented to the eye all in capital letters:—

"DON'T HALLO BEFORE YOU'RE QUITE OUT OF THE WOOD; NEVER BORROW A HORSE YOU DON'T KNOW 'OF A FRIEND; LOOK AT THE CLOCK; WHO SUPS WITH THE DEVIL SHOULD HAVE A LONG SPOON," &c., each of which is intended as a rare piece of humour to wind up with. The stanzas also display in capital letters such excellent new wit as—"KEEP YOUR HANDKERCHIEF SAFE IN YOUR POCKET; LITTLE PITCHERS HAVE LONG EARS;' BEWARE OF THE RHINE, AND TAKE CARE OF THE RHINO; I WISH YOU MAY GET IT; YOU CAN'T MAKE A SILK PURSE OF A SOW'S EAR; A BIRD IN THE HAND IS WORTH TWO IN THE BUSH!" &c. As for the distiches and stanzas at the end of most of the legends under the old-fashioned head "moral," they are all written upon the same principle of arrant twaddling advice, the self-evident pointlessness of which is intended to look like humour, and are humiliating to common sense.

Amidst all these heavy denunciations it is "quite a relief" to be able to admire something. In freedom and melody of comic versification, and in the originality of compound rhymes, the "Ingoldsby Legends" surpass everything of the kind that has appeared since the days of Hudibras and of Peter Pindar. This method of compound rhyming is of a kind which may be regarded, if not as the discovery of new powers in the English lan-

guage, at least as an enlargement of the domain of those powers. The legends contain in almost every page the best possible illustration of the true principle of rhyming, which the best poets, and the public, have always felt to depend solely upon a good ear, and (more especially in the *English* language) to have nothing whatever to do with the eye and the similarity of letters, — an absurd notion which the majority of critics, to this very day, entertain, and display. These legends are, in this respect, philological studies, indisputable theoretically, and as novel as they are amusing in practice. The most incongruous and hitherto unimaginable combinations become thoroughly malleable in the Ingoldsby hand, and words of the most dissimilar letters constitute *perfect rhymes*, single, double, and triple. Moreover, these instances are not a few; they are abundant, and almost in every page.

" His features, and phiz awry
Show'd so much misery,
And so like a dragon he
Look'd in his agony," &c.

INGOLDSBY *Legends, 2nd Series.*

" A nice little boy held a golden ewer,
Emboss'd and fill'd with water as pure
As any that flows between Rheims and Namur."

1st Series.

Extremely annoyed by the 'tarnation-*whop*,' *as it*
's call'd in Kentuck, on his head and its *opposite*,
Blogg show'd fight
When he saw, by the light
Of the flickering candle, that had not yet quite
Burnt down in the socket, though not over bright,
Certain dark-colour'd stains, as of blood newly spilt,
Revealed by the dog's having scratch'd off the quilt,
Which hinted a story of horror and guilt!
'Twas '*no mistake*'—
He was '*wide awake*'
In an instant; for, when only decently drunk,
Nothing sobers a man so completely as '*funk*.'"

Ibid.

"From his finger he draws
His costly turquoise;
And, not thinking at all about little Jackdaws," &c.

Ibid.

"Both Knights of the Golden Fleece, high-born Hidalgoes,
With whom e'en the King himself quite as a 'pal' goes."

2nd Series.

"Or if ever you've witness'd the face of a sailor
Return'd from a voyage, and escaped from a gale, or
Poeticè 'Boreas' that 'blustering railer,'
To find that his wife, when he hastens to hail her
Has just run away with his cash—and a tailor," &c.

Ibid.

All these rhymes are perfect rhymes to the ear, which is the only true judge. Let critics of bad ear, or no-ear, beware how they commit themselves in future by attempting to make correct rhyming a

matter of *literary* eye-sight. These examples bring the question to a test more finally than any argument or disquisition could do.

"The Most Reverend Don Garcilasso Quevedo
Was just at this *time, as he*
Now held the *Primacy,*" &c.

Ibid.

"A long yellow pin-a-fore
Hangs down, each chin afore," &c.

Ibid.

Which it seems of a sort is
To puzzle our Cortes,
And since it has quite flabbergasted this Diet, I
Look to your Grace with no little anxiety, &c.

* * * *

So put your considering cap on—we're curious
To learn your receipt for a Prince of Asturias.

* * * *

So distinguish'd a Pilgrim,—especially when he
Considers the boon will not cost him one penny.

* * * *

Since your Majesty don't like the pease in the *shoe, or to*
Travel—what say you to burning a *Jew or two?*
Of all cookeries, most
The Saints love a roast!
And a Jew's, of all others, the best dish to toast, &c.

Ibid.

The rest of the rascals jump'd on him, and *Burk'd him*
The poor little Page, too, himself got no quarter; but
Was serv'd the same way,
And was found the next day
With his heels in the air, and *his head* in the water-butt.

1*st Series.*

There is a class of people, who, endeavouring to reduce poetry to the strict laws of the understanding, defeat themselves of every chance of being permitted to understand poetry: there is, however, a much larger class, who, in reading verse of any kind, abandon all use whatever of the understanding. The specimens of these admirable and masterly rhymes must not render us insensible to the hideous levity of the pictures they continually present to the imagination. Thrown off our guard by the comicalities of the style, such things may be passed over with a laugh the first time; (they have been so, too generally) but a second look produces a shudder, recollecting, as we do, the previous allusion to Greenacre, and knowing that these horrors are not meant for pantomime.

In making some remarks on "the diseased appetite for horrors," Mr. Fonblanque has this passage,—

"The landlord upon whose premises a murder is committed, is now-a-days a made man. The place becomes a show in the neighbourhood as the scene of a fair. The barn in which Maria Martin was murdered by Corder, was sold in tooth-picks; the hedge through which the body of Mr. Weare was dragged, was purchased by the inch; Bishop's house bids fair to go off in tobacco-stoppers and snuff-boxes, and the well will be drained at a guinea a quart. Really, if people indulge in this vile and horrid taste, they will tempt landlords to get murders committed in their houses, for the great profit accruing from the morbid curiosity."*

Observe the different use made of wit in the fore-

* "England under Seven Administrations," by Albany Fonblanque. Vol. ii.

going extract, where ridicule and laughter are applied to a moral purpose, *viz.* to the diseased appetites for horrors—not to the horrors themselves, which were never, in the history of literature, systematically *ripped up* for merriment, till the appearance of these Legends of sanguinary Broad Grins.

The present age is sufficiently rich in its comic poets. They are nearly all remarkable for the *gusto* of their pleasantry, and in the singular fact that they have but little resemblance to each other. George Colman was an original; Thomas Moore was an original; the same may be said of Horace and James Smith; of Theodore Hook; of Hood,* and Laman Blanchard and Titmarsh; of several of the wits of *Blackwood*, and more especially of *Fraser*. And here, in the latter, a totally new species of comic writing should be noticed, *viz.*, that of the classical burlesque, in which "Father Prout," and the late Dr. Maginn, have displayed a mastery over the Greek and Latin versification that was previously unknown in literature, and certainly never suspected as possible. It was as if the dead languages were suddenly called to a state of preternatural life and activity, in which their old friends scarcely could believe their eyes, and the resuscitated

* It was intended to place the name of "Thomas Hood" in conjunction with that of "Thomas Ingoldsby" at the head of this paper; but the idea was abandoned out of respect to Mr. Hood, the moment the present writer had, for the first time, read these astounding "Legends!"

Tongues themselves appeared equally astonished at their own identity. All these writers are in various ways full of the soul of humour, wit, or merriment; but *not one of them* ever dreams of making a plaything of the last struggles of humanity, or the "raw heads" of the charnel house. The same natural bounds are also equally observed by all the comic prose writers, numerous as they are. The "Ingoldsby Legends" stand quite alone—and they always will stand quite alone,—for the "joke" will never be repeated.

They are constructed upon a very curious and outrageous principle. As everybody finds his self-love and sense of the ridiculous in a high state of enjoyment at a "damned tragedy" by reason of the incongruity of the actual emotions compared with those which the subject was naturally intended to convey, and the luckless poet had built all his hopes upon conveying — the author of these Legends has hit upon a plan for turning this not very amiable fact to account, by the production of a series of self-damned tragedies. Or, perhaps, they may be more properly termed most sanguinary melo-dramas, intermixed, with broad farce over the knife and bowl. The justly reprehensible novel of "Jack Sheppard" had nothing in it of this kind; its brutalities were at least left to produce their natural revulsion; the heroes did not gambol and slide in crimson horror,

and paint their felon faces with it to "grin through collars."

The prose tales of these volumes all harp, more or less, upon the same inhuman strings. Some of them, like the "Spectre of Tappington," are simply indelicate, but others are revolting. The death-bed (the reader is made fully to believe it is a death-bed) of the lady Rohesia, is of the latter kind. Her husband, and her waiting maid, though fully believing her to be just at the last gasp, carry on a direct amour seated on the edge of the death-bed; and a "climax" is only prevented by the bursting of the dying lady's quinsey! The "Singular Passage in the life of the late Henry Harris, *Doctor in Divinity*, as related by the *Reverend* Jasper Ingoldsby, M.A., his friend and Executor" has suggestions of still worse things. Though tedious in commencing, it is a well told, exciting tale of supernatural events. The chief event shall be quoted. A young girl is betrothed to a young man, who bids her farewell for a time, and practises the black art upon her while absent, so that she is sometimes "spirited away" from her home into his chamber by night, there to be subject to all kinds of unmentionable outrages. He moreover has a friend to assist in his orgie! The girl thus alludes to it:—

"How shall I proceed—but no, it is impossible,—not even to you, Sir, can I—dare I—recount the proceedings of that unhallowed night of horror and shame. Were my life extended to a term commensu-

rate with that of the Patriarchs of old,' never could its detestable, its damning pollutions be effaced from my remembrance; and oh! above all, never could I forget the diabolical glee which sparkled in the eyes of my fiendish tormentors, as they witnessed the *worse* than useless struggles of their miserable victim. Oh! why was it not permitted me to take refuge in unconsciousness—nay, in death itself, from the abominations of which I was compelled to be, not only *a witness*, but a partaker?" &c.—*Ingoldsby Legends*, 1*st Series*.

The introduction of a second young man, by way of complicating this preternatural sensualism and horror, admits of no comment. No merriment and burlesque is introduced here. For once, a revolting scene and its suggestions, are allowed to retain their true colours. The master-secret of a life froths up from the depths, and the Tale closes as such things mostly do—with a death that looks like annihilation.

Those who endeavour to justify this writer by the sudden discovery of a moral aim in his ridiculing real horrors (in order to teach the vulgar to laugh at them) say not one syllable of the gross licentiousness of these tales! There *is* nothing to say for them.

Refinement is an essential property of the Ideal, and whatever is touched by ideality is so far redeemed from earth. But where there is *no* touch of it, all is of the earth earthy. In this condition stands the Genius of the Ingoldsby Legends, eye-deep in its own dark slough. Everything falls into it which approaches, or is drawn near. Of all pure things, Fairy Tales are among the most pure and innocent;

their ideality can pass safe and unsullied through all visible forms. But if amidst their revels and thin-robed dancings in the moonlight and over the moss, a sudden allusion be made which *reduces* them to earth —a mortal fact suddenly brought home, like that which says "Look! this is a woman;—Miss Jones of the Olympic!" then does the ideal vanish away with fairy-land, and leave us with a minor theatre in its worst moments, and with such a tale as "Sir Rupert the Fearless," which is written upon the principle of one of those Olympic doggrel burlesques, the desecration of poetry in sense as in feeling. Their tendency is to encourage the public not to believe in true poetry or innocence on the stage, but to be always ready to laugh or think ill things.

Having previously made an allusion to the laughable circumstance of some Jews being burnt alive, the legend which describes it may form an appropriate conclusion to this exposition. It is entitled "The Auto-da-Fé." This is the story. King Ferdinand had been married six years, and his consort not having presented him with "an Infant of Spain," he consults some of his grandees as to what he shall do for "an heir to the throne?" All this part is admirably worked up. The grandees evade reply, and "the *Most Reverend* Don Garcilasso Quevedo," Archbishop of Toledo, is then consulted, and finally proposes an Auto-da-fé, at which they

would burn, roast, and toast some Jews. How this was at all likely to occasion her Majesty to present Spain with an heir, every reader, not in the secret, must be quite at a loss to guess. The Auto-da-fé, however, takes place, and by way of proving that it really is one, and not a pantomimic burlesque, the author introduces it by a few serious remarks on the "shrieks of pain and wild affright," and the "soul-wrung groans of deep despair, and blood, and death." In the very next stanza, he has some fun about "the smell of old clothes," and of the Jews roasting; and in speaking of "the groans of the dying," he says they were "all hissing, and spitting, and boiling, and frying," &c. The allusion also to the very delicate story of making "pretty pork," at such a moment, finishes this monomaniasm of misplaced levity—"the *bonne bouche!*" as he calls it, of the Auto-da-fé! But now for the heir to the throne—the Infant of Spain, which all this horror was to influence the Queen in producing to the world! Her Majesty was absent from the atrocities so merrily described; she had "locked herself up" in her Oriel—but not alone. A male devotee was with her to assist in "Pater, and Ave, and Credo," the *double-entêndre* character of which is made very apparent, so that her Majesty does, in due course, bless the nation with an heir to the throne. And who does the astonished reader, who may not happen

to be familiar with these very popular Legends, suppose it was that her Majesty had "locked herself up with?" Why, the Archbishop of Toledo! Yes, the most reverend Garcilasso!—and so far from the slightest doubt being left on the matter, the author says it is not clear to him but that all Spain would have thought very meanly of "the pious pair" had it been otherwise! The "Moral" at the end, is as usual. In fact, rather worse. It tells you, "when you 're in Rome, to do as Rome does!" and "in Spain, you must do as they do"—"don't be nice!" &c., &c.

Throughout the whole of the foregoing remarks, it should be observed that no animadversions have been made on religious grounds, nor on the score of conventional morality, nor on matters relating to social intercourse; nor have any personalities escaped from the pen. All that has been said—and there was much to say—is upon the abstract grounds of Literature and Art; with a view to the exposition and denunciation of a false principle of composition, as exemplified in licentious works, which are unredeemed and unextenuated by any one sincere passion, and are consequently among the very worst kind of influences that could be exercised upon a rising generation. The present age is bad enough without such assistance. Wherefore an iron hand is now laid upon the shoulder of Thomas Ingoldsby, and a voice murmurs in his ear, "Brother!—no more of this!"

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

"Thy worth and skill exempts thee from the throng."

MILTON.

"Let his page,
Which charms the chosen Spirits of the Age,
Fold itself up for a serener clime
Of years to come, and find its recompensé
In that just expectation."

SHELLEY.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

WALTER LANDOR, when a Rugby boy, was famous among other feats of strength and skill, for the wonderful precision with which he used a cast net; and he was not often disposed to ask permission of the owners of those ponds or streams that suited his morning's fancy. One day a farmer suddenly came down upon him; and ordered him to desist, and give up his net. Whereupon Landor instantly cast his net over the farmer's head; caught him; entangled him; overthrew him; and when he was exhausted, addressed the enraged and discomfited face beneath the meshes, till the farmer promised to behave discreetly. The pride that resented a show of intimidation, the prudence that instantly foresaw the only means of superseding punishment, and the promptitude of will and action, are sufficiently conspicuous. The wilful energy and self-depen-

dent force of character displayed by Walter Landor as a boy, and accompanied by physical power and activity, all of which were continued through manhood, and probably have been so, to a great extent, even up to the present time, have exerted an influence upon his genius of a very peculiar kind:—a genius healthy, but the healthfulness not always well applied — resolute, in a lion-like sense, but not intellectually concentrated and continuous; and seeming to be capable of mastering all things except its own wilful impulses.

Mr. Landor is a man of genius and learning, who stands in a position unlike that of any other eminent individual of his time. He has received no apparent influence from any one of his contemporaries; nor have they or the public received any apparent influence from him. The absence of any fixed and definite influence upon the public is actually as it seems; but that he has exercised a considerable influence upon the minds of many of his contemporaries is inevitable, because so fine a spirit could never have passed through any competent medium without communicating its electric forces, although from the very fineness of its elements, the effect, like the cause, has been of too subtle a nature to leave a tangible or visible impress.

To all these causes combined is attributable the singular fact, that although Walter Savage Landor

has been before the public as an author during the last fifty years, his genius seldom denied, but long since generally recognized, and his present position admissibly in that of the highest rank of authors — and no man higher — there has never been any philosophical and critical estimate of his powers. Admired he has often been abundantly, but the admiration has only been supported by "extract," or by an off-hand opinion. The present paper does not pretend to supply this great deficiency in our critical literature; it will attempt to do no more than "open up" the discussion.

Walter Landor, when at Rugby school, was a leader in all things, yet one who did not associate with his schoolfellows—the infallible sign of a strong and original character and course through life. He was conspicuous there for his resistance to every species of tyranny, either of the masters and their rules, or the boys and their system of making fags, which things he resolutely opposed "against all odds;" and he was, at the same time, considered arrogant and overbearing in his own conduct. He was almost equally famous for riding out of bounds, boxing, leaping, net-casting, stone-throwing, and for making Greek and Latin verses. Many of these verses were repeated at Rugby forty years after he had left the school. The "master," however, studiously slighted him so long, that when at last the token was given

of approbation of certain Latin verses, the indignant young classic being obliged to copy them out fairly in the "play-book," added a few more, commencing with,—

"Hæc sunt malorum pessima carminum
Quot Landor unquam scripsit; at accipe
Quæ Tarquini servas cloacam,
Unde tuum, dea flava nomen:" &c.

From Rugby to Trinity College, Oxford, was the next remove of Walter Landor. He was "rusticated" for firing off a gun in the quadrangle; but as he never intended to take a degree, he did not return. He left Oxford — let all the juvenile critics who have taken up facile pens of judgment about Mr. Landor during the last ten years, tremble as they read, and "doubt their own abilities"—in the summer of 1793, when he put forth a small volume of poems. They were published by Cadell, and it will not be thought very surprising that the first poems of a young man, at that time quite unknown to the world, should in the lapse of fifty years have become out of print. His next performances may, with sufficient trouble, be obtained. They are the poems of "Gebir," "Chrysaor," the "Phocæans," &c., and the very high encomiums passed upon "Gebir" by Southey, with whom Landor was not acquainted till some twelve years afterwards, were accounted as sufficient fame by their author.

Southey's eulogy of the poem appeared in the Critical Review, to the great anger of Gifford, whose translation of "Juvenal" was by no means so much praised in the same number. One of the most strikingly characteristic facts in connection with Mr. Landor is, that while he has declared his own doubts as to whether Nature intended him for a poet, "because he could never please himself by anything he ever did of that kind," it must be perfectly evident to everybody who knows his writings, that he never took the least pains to please the public. The consequences were almost inevitable.

After leaving Trinity, Mr. Landor passed some months in London, learning Italian, and avoiding all society; he then retired to Swansea, where he wrote "Gebir"—lived in comparative solitude—made love —and was happy.

The "attitude" in which the critical literati of the time received the poem of "Gebir," was very much the same as though such a work had never been published. A well-written critique, however, did appear as one exception, in a northern provincial paper, in which Mr. Landor was compared, in certain respects, with Goëthe; another we have also seen, which was full of grandly eloquent and just expressions of appreciation — printed, we believe, in Aberdeen, within two years since, and signed G. G.;—but the earliest was written by Southey, as

previously stated. No doubt Mr. Landor has read the latter, but it is his habit (and one more common among authors of original genius than is at all suspected) never to read critiques upon himself. His feeling towards this department of literature may be estimated by his offer of a hot penny roll and a pint of stout, for breakfast (!) to any critic who could write one of his Imaginary Conversations—an indigestible pleasantry which horribly enraged more than one critic of the time. Of "Gebir," however, Coleridge was accustomed to speak in terms of great praise; till one day he heard Southey speak of it with equal admiration, after which Coleridge altered his mind—'he did *not* admire it—he must have been mistaken.'

A few biographical memoranda of Mr. Landor will be found interesting, previous to offering some remarks on his genius and works. During the time he was studying Italian in London, after leaving Trinity, his godfather, General Powell, was anxious that he should enter the army, for which he seemed peculiarly adapted, excepting that he entertained republican principles which "would not do there." This proposal being negatived, his father offered to allow him 400*l.* per annum, if he would adopt the law and reside in the Temple; but declared that he would allow him but little more than one-third of that sum, if he refused. Of course Walter Landor

well knew that he might have enjoyed a gay London life with 400*l.* per annum, in the Temple, and neglected the law, as, here and there, a young gentleman of the Temple is apt to do; he, however, preferred to avoid false pretences, accepted the smaller income, and studied Italian.

Mr. Landor wrote verses in Italian at this period, which were not very good, yet not perhaps worse than Milton's. The poetry of Italy did not captivate his more severely classical taste at first; he says it seemed to him "like the juice of grapes and melons left on yesterday's plate." He had just been reading Æschylus, Sophocles, and Pindar. But his opinion was altered directly he read Dante, which he did not do till some years afterwards.

That his uncle was not so far wrong in thinking Landor well suited to a military life, the following anecdote will serve to attest.—At the breaking out of the Spanish war against the French, he was the first Englishman who landed in Spain. He raised a few troops at his own expense and conducted them from Corunna to Aguilar, the head-quarters of Gen. Blake, Viceroy of Gallicia. For this he received the thanks of the Supreme Junta in the Madrid Gazette, together with an acknowledgment of the donation of 20,000 *reals* from Mr. Landor. He returned the letters and documents, with his commission, to Don Pedro Cevallos, on the subversion of

the Constitution by Ferdinand,—telling Don Pedro that he was willing to aid a people in the assertion of its liberties against the antagonist of Europe, but that he could have nothing to do with a perjurer and traitor.

Mr. Landor went to Paris in the beginning of the century, where he witnessed the ceremony of Napoleon being made Consul for life, amidst the acclamations of multitudes. He subsequently saw the dethroned and deserted Emperor pass through Tours on his way to embark, as he intended, for America. Napoleon was attended only by a single servant, and descended at the Prefecture, unrecognized by anybody excepting Landor. The people of Tours were most hostile to Napoleon; Landor had always felt a hatred towards him, and now he had but to point one finger at him, and it would have done what all the artillery of twenty years of war had failed to do. The people would have torn him to pieces. Need it be said Landor was too "good a hater," and too noble a man, to avail himself of such an opportunity. He held his breath, and let the hero pass. Perhaps, after all, there was no need of any of this hatred on the part of Mr. Landor, who, in common with many other excessively wilful men, were probably as much exasperated at Napoleon's commanding successes, as at his falling off from pure republican principles. Howbeit, Landor's great

hatred, and yet "greater" forbearance are hereby chronicled.

In 1806, Mr. Landor sold several estates in Warwickshire which had been in his family nearly seven hundred years, and purchased Lantony and Comjoy in Monmouthshire, where he laid out nearly 70,000*l.* Here he made extensive improvements, giving employment daily, for many years, to between twenty and thirty labourers in building and planting. He made a road, at his own expense, of eight miles long, and planted and fenced half a million of trees. The infamous behaviour of some tenants caused him to leave the country. At this time he had a million more trees all ready to plant, which, as he observed, "were lost to the country by driving me from it. I may speak of *their* utility, if I must not of my own." The two chief offenders were brothers who rented farms of Mr. Landor to the amount of 1500*l.* per annum, and were to introduce an improved system of Suffolk husbandry. Mr. Landor got no rent from them, but all manner of atrocious annoyances. They even rooted up his trees, and destroyed whole plantations. They paid nobody. When neighbours and workpeople applied for money, Mr. Landor says, "they were referred to the Devil, with their wives and families, while these brothers had their two bottles of wine upon the table. As for the Suffolk system of agriculture, wheat was

sown upon the last of May, and cabbages for winter food were planted in August or September." Mr. Landor eventually remained master of the field, and drove his tormentors across the seas; but so great was his disgust at these circumstances that he resolved to leave England. Before his departure he caused his house, which had cost him some 8000*l.* to be taken down, that his son might never have the chance of similar vexations in that place.

In 1811, Mr. Landor married Julia, the daughter of J. Thuillier de Malaperte, descendant and representative of the Baron de Neuve-ville, first gentleman of the bed-chamber to Charles the Eighth. He went to reside in Italy in 1815, and during several years occupied the Palazzo Medici, in Florence. Subsequently he purchased the beautiful and romantic villa of Count Gherardesca at Fiesole, with its gardens and farms, scarcely a quarter of an hour's walk from the ancient villa of Lorenzo de' Medici, and resided there many years in comparative solitude.

Of the difference between the partialities of the public, and the eventual judgments of the people; between a deeply-founded fame and an ephemeral interest, few more striking examples will perhaps be discovered in future years than in the solitary course of Walter Savage Landor amidst the various "lights of his day." He has incontestibly displayed

original genius as a writer; the highest critical faculty—that sympathy with genius and knowledge which can only result from imagination and generous love of truth—and also a fine scholarship in the spirit as well as the letter of classical attainments. But the public, tacitly, has denied his claims, or worse —admitted them with total indifference,—letting fall from its benumbed fingers, work after work, not because any one ventured to say, or perhaps even to think, that the books were unworthy, but because the hands were cold. A writer of original genius may be popular in his lifetime, as sometimes occurs, by means of certain talents and tacts comprehended in his genius; by the aid of startling novelties, or by broad and general effects; and by the excitement of adventitious circumstances;—on which ground is to be worked the problem of Lord Byron's extensive popularity with the very same daily and yearly reading public that made mocks and mowes at Coleridge, and Wordsworth, and Shelley, and Keats. But, as a general rule, the originality of a man, say and do what he may, is necessarily in itself an argument against his rapid popularity. In the case of Mr. Landor, however, other causes than the originality of his faculty have opposed his favour with the public. He has the most select audience perhaps,—the fittest, fewest,—of any distinguished author of the day; and this of his choice. "Give me," he said in one

of his prefaces, "ten accomplished men for readers, and I am content;"—and the event does not by any means so far as we could desire, outstrip the modesty, or despair, or disdain, of this aspiration. He writes criticism for critics, and poetry for poets: his drama, when he is dramatic, will suppose neither pit nor gallery, nor critics, nor dramatic laws. He is not a publican among poets—he does not sell his Amreeta cups upon the highway. He delivers them rather with the dignity of a giver, to ticketted persons; analyzing their flavour and fragrance with a learned delicacy, and an appeal to the esoteric. His very spelling of English is uncommon and theoretic. He has a vein of humour which by its own nature is peculiarly subtle and evasive; he therefore refines upon it, by his art, in order to prevent anybody discovering it without a grave, solicitous, and courtly approach, which is unspeakably ridiculous to all the parties concerned, and which no doubt the author secretly enjoys. And as if poetry were not, in English, a sufficiently unpopular dead language, he has had recourse to writing poetry in Latin; with dissertations on the Latin tongue, to fence it out doubly from the populace. "*Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo.*"

Whether Mr. Landor writes Latin or English, poetry or prose, he does it all with a certain artistic composure, as if he knew what he was doing, and respected the cunning of his right hand. At times he

displays an equal respect for its wilfulness. In poetry, his "Gebir," the "Phocæans" and some other performances take a high classic rank. He can put out extraordinary power both in description and situation; but the vitality, comprehended in the power, does not overflow along the inferior portions of the work, so as to sustain them to the level of the reader's continued attention. The poet rather builds up to his own elevations than carries them out and on; and the reader passes from admiration to admiration, by separate states, or by shocks, and not by a continuity of interest through the intervals of emotion. Thus it happens that his best dramatic works,—those, the impression of which on the mind is most definite and excellent,—are fragmentary; and that his complete dramas are not often read through twice, even by readers who applaud them, but for the sake of a particular act or scene.

A remark should be made on Mr. Landor's blank verse, in which the poems just named, and several others, are written. It is the very best of the regular-syllable class, the versification of "numbers," as they have been characteristically called by the schools. His blank verse is not only the most regular that ever was written, but it is the most sweet, and far less monotonous than we should expect of a musical system which excludes occasional discords. It has all the effect of the most melo-

dious rhyming heroic verse; indeed, it often gives the impression of elegiac verses in rhyme. As blank verse it is a very bad model. There is more freedom in his dramatic verse, and always the purest style.

His dramatic works (except the compact little scenes entitled "Pentalogia," which are admirable,) are written upon an essentially undramatic principle; or, more probably, on no principle at all. Mr. Landor well knows "all the laws," and they seem to provoke his will to be lawless. In this species of drama-looking composition he displays at times the finest passion, the most pure and perfect style of dramatic dialogue, and an intensity of mental movements, with their invisible, undeclared, yet necessarily tragic results; all of which proves him to possess the most wonderful three-fourths of a great dramatic genius which ever appeared in the world. But the fourth part is certainly wanting by way of making good his ground to the eyes, and ears, and understanding of the masses. In his "Andrea of Hungary," the action does not commence till the last scene of the third act; and is not continued in the first scene of the fourth! Instead of the expected continuation, after all this patience, the confounded reader has his breath taken away by the sauntering entrance of Boccacio—the novelist—accompanied by Fiammetta, who having nothing whatever to do with the drama, the former sings her a little song! This

extremely free-and-easy style of treading the boards is so very new and delightful that it excites the idea of *continuing* the scene by the introduction of the Genius of the Drama, with a paper speech coming out of his mouth, on which is inscribed the Laws of Concentration and Continuity, the Laws of Progressive action, and the Art of Construction. To whom, *Enter* the Author, *with a cast-net.* He makes his cast to admiration; trips up the heels of the Genius of the Drama, and leaves it sprawling. It is his own doing.

In whatever Mr. Landor writes, his power, when he puts it forth, is of the first order. He is classical in the highest sense. His conceptions stand out, clearly cut and fine, in a magnitude and nobility as far as possible removed from the small and sickly vagueness common to this century of letters. If he seems obscure at times, it is from no infirmity or inadequacy of thought or word, but from extreme concentration, and involution in brevity—for a short string can be tied in a knot, as well as a long one. He can be tender, as the strong can best be; and his pathos, when it comes, is profound. His descriptions are full and startling; his thoughts, self-produced and bold; and he has the art of taking a common-place under a new aspect, and of leaving the Roman brick, marble. In marble indeed, he seems to work; for there is an angularity in the workmanship, whether

of prose or verse, which the very exquisiteness of the polish renders more conspicuous. You may complain too of hearing the chisel; but after all, you applaud the work—it is a work well done. The elaboration produces no sense of heaviness,—the severity of the outline does not militate against beauty;—if it is cold, it is also noble—if not impulsive, it is suggestive. As a writer of Latin poems, he ranks with our most successful scholars and poets; having less harmony and majesty than Milton had,—when he aspired to that species of "Life in Death,"—but more variety and freedom of utterance. Mr. Landor's English prose writings possess most of the characteristics of his poetry; only they are more perfect in their class. His "Pericles and Aspasia," and "Pentameron," are books for the world and for all time, whenever the world and time shall come to their senses about them; complete in beauty of sentiment and subtlety of criticism. His general style is highly scholastic and elegant,—his sentences have articulations, if such an expression may be permitted, of very excellent proportions. And, abounding in striking images and thoughts, he is remarkable for making clear the ground around them, and for lifting them, like statues to pedestals, where they may be seen most distinctly, and strike with the most enduring though often the most gradual impression. This is the case both in his prose works and his

poetry. It is more conspicuously true of some of his smaller poems, which for quiet classic grace and tenderness, and exquisite care in their polish, may best be compared with beautiful cameos and vases of the antique.

Two works should be mentioned—one of which is only known to a few among his admirers, and the other not at all. Neither of them were published, and though printed they were very little circulated. The first is entitled, "Poems from the Arabic and Persian." They pretended to be translations, but were written by Landor for the pleasure of misleading certain orientalists, and other learned men. In this he succeeded, and for the first time in the known history of such hoaxes, *not* to the discredit of the credulous, for the poems are extremely beautiful, and breathe the true oriental spirit throughout. They are ornate in fancy, — graceful, and full of unaffected tenderness. They were printed in 1800, with many extremely erudite notes; in writing which, the author, no doubt, laughed very much to himself at the critical labour and searching they would excite. The other production is called "A Satire upon Satirists, and Admonition to Detractors," printed in 1836. It contains many just indignations, terrible denunciations, and cleaving blows against those who used not many years since to make a rabid crusade upon all genius; but the satire

occasionally makes attacks upon some who do not deserve to be so harshly treated by a brother author; and we cannot but rejoice that this satire (in its present state) has not been published.

Mr. Landor's wit and humour are of a very original kind, as previously remarked. Perhaps in none of his writings does their peculiarity occur so continuously as in a series of Letters, entitled "High and Low Life in Italy." Every sarcasm, irony, jest, or touch of humour, is secreted beneath the skin of each tingling member of his sentences. His wit and his humour are alike covered up amidst various things, apparently intended to lead the reader astray, as certain birds are wont to do when you approach the nests that contain their broods. Or, the main jests and knotty points of a paragraph are planed down to the smooth level of the rest of the sentences, so that the reader may walk over them without knowing anything of the matter. All this may be natural to his genius; it may also result from pride, or perversity. So far from seeking the public, his genius has displayed a sort of apathy, if not antipathy, to popularity; *therefore*, the public must court it, if they would enjoy it; to possess yourself of his wit you must scrutinize; to be let into the secret of his humour you must advance "pointing the toe." Such are the impressions derivable from Mr. Landor's writings. In private

social intercourse nothing of the kind is apparent, and there are few men whose conversation is more unaffected, manly, pleasing, and instructive.

The imagination of Mr. Landor is richly graphic, classical, and subtly refined. In portraying a character, his imagination identifies itself with the mentality and the emotions of its inner being, and all those idiosyncracies which may be said to exist between a man and himself, but with which few, if anybody else, have any business. In other respects, most of his characters—especially those of his own invention—might live, think, move, and have their being in space, so little does their author trouble himself with their corporeal conditions. Whether it be that their author feels his own *physique* so strongly that it does not occur to him that any one else can need such a thing—*he* will find all that for them—or that it is the habit of his genius to abstract itself from corporeal realities, (partly from the perverse love a man continually has of being his own "opposite,") and ascend into a more subtle element of existence,—certain it is that many of his characters are totally without material or definite *form*; appear to live no where, and upon nothing, and to be very independent agents, to whom practical action seldom or never occurs. "They think, therefore they are." They feel, and know (they

are apt too often to know as much as their author) therefore they are characters. But they are usually without bodily substance; and such form as they seem to have, is an abstraction which plays round them, but might go off in air at any time, and the loss be scarcely apparent. The designs of his larger works, as wholes, are also deficient in compactness of form, precision of outline, and condensation. They often seem wild, not at all intellectually, but from ungoverned will. It is difficult not to arrive at conclusions of this kind—though different minds will, of course, see differently—after a careful study of the dramas of "Andrea of Hungary," "Giovanna of Naples," and "Fra Rupert;" the "Pericles and Aspasia," the "Pentameron and Pentalogia," &c. The very title of the "Imaginary Conversations" gives a strong foretaste of Mr. Landor's predominating ideality, and dismissal of mortal bonds and conditions. The extraordinary productions last named are as though their author had been rarified while listening to the conversation, or the double soliloquies, of august Shades; all of which he had carefully written down on resuming his corporeality, and where his memory failed him he had supplied the deficiency with some sterling stuff of his own. The Landorean "peeps" seen through these etherial dialogues and soliloquies of the mighty dead, are seldom to be mistaken; and though hardly at

times in accordance with their company, are seldom unworthy of the highest.

As a partial exception to some of the foregoing remarks, should be mentioned the "Examination of William Shakspeare before Sir Thomas Lucy, Knt., touching Deer-stealing." Of all the thousands of books that have issued from the press about Shakspeare, this one of Mr. Landor's is by far the most admirable. It is worth them all. There is the high-water mark of genius upon every page, lit by as true a sun as ever the ocean mirrored. Perfect and inimitable from beginning to end, that it has not become the most popular of all the books relating to Shakspeare, is only to be accounted for by some perversity or dulness of the public. The book is, certainly, not read. There is great love and reading bestowed upon every cant about Shakspeare, and much interest has been shown in all the hoaxes. Perhaps the public thought this book was authentic.

"Other stars await other discoveries. Few and solitary, and wide asunder, are those who calculate their relative distances, their mysterious influences, their glorious magnitude, and their stupendous height. 'Tis so, believe me, with the truest and best poetry. Homer they say was blind; he might have been ere he died; that he sat among the blind, we are sure. * * * Be patient! From the higher heavens of poetry, it is long before the radiance of the brightest star can reach the world below. We hear that one man finds out one beauty, another man finds out another, placing his observatory and instruments on the poet's grave. The worms must have eaten us

before it is rightly known what we are. It is only when we are skeletons that we are boxed and ticketed, and prized and shown."

LANDOR, *Examination of William Shakspere, p.* 218.

In an age of criticism like this, when to "take" a position over a man and his work, is supposed to include proportionably superior powers of judgment, though not one discovery, argument, or searching remark, be adduced in proof; when analysis is publicly understood to mean everything that can be done for the attainment of a correct estimate, and the very term, alone, of synthesis looks pedantic and *outrè;* and when any anonymous young man may gravely seat himself, in the fancy of his unknowing readers, far above an author who may have published works — of genius, learning, or knowledge and experience, at the very period that his *We* Judge was perhaps learning to write at school, —it is only becoming in an attempt like that of the present paper, to disclaim all assumption of finality of judgment upon a noble veteran of established genius, concerning whom there has never yet been one philosophically elaborated criticism. To be the first to "break ground" upon the broad lands of the authors of characters and scenes from real life, is often rather a perilous undertaking for any known critic who values his reputation; but to unlock the secret chambers of an etherial inventiveness, and pronounce at once upon its contents, would only mani-

fest the most short-sighted presumption. Simply to have unlocked such chambers for the entrance of others, were task enough for one contemporary.

Any sincere and mature opinions of the master of an art are always valuable, and not the less so when commenting upon established reputations, or those about which a contest still exists. We may thus be shaken in our faith, or confirmed in it. Mr. Landor's mode of expressing his opinion often amounts to appealing to an inner sense for a corroboration of the truth. He says, in a letter to a friend, "I found the 'Faery Queen' the most delightful book in the world to fall asleep upon by the sea-side. Geoffrey Chaucer always kept me wide awake, and beat at a distance all other English poets but Shakspeare and Milton. In many places Keats approaches him." After remarking on the faults and occasional affectations discoverable in two or three of the earliest poems of that true and beautiful genius, Mr. Landor adds that he considers "no poet (always excepting Shakspeare) displays so many happy expressions, or so vivid a fancy as Keats. A few hours in the Pæcile with the Tragedians would have made him all he wanted — majestically sedate. I wonder if any remorse has overtaken his murderers."

Mr. Landor is not at all the product of the present age; he scarcely belongs to it; he has no direct influence upon it: but he has been an influence to some of its

best teachers, and to some of the most refined illustrators of its vigorous spirit. For the rest—for the duty, the taste, or the favor of posterity—when a succession of publics shall have slowly accumulated a residuum of "golden opinions" in the shape of pure admiring verdicts of competent minds, then only, if ever, will he attain his just estimation in the not altogether impartial roll of Fame. If ever?—the words fell from the pen—and the manly voice of him to whom they were applied, seems to call from his own clear altitude, "Let the words remain." For in the temple of posterity there have hitherto always appeared some immortalities which had better have burnt out, while some great works, or names, or both, have been suffered to drift away into oblivion. That such is likely to be the fate of the writings of Walter Savage Landor, nobody can for a moment believe; but were it so destined, and he could foresee the result, one can imagine his taking a secret pleasure in this resolution of his works into their primitive elements.

WILLIAM AND MARY HOWITT.

" While the still morn went out with sandals grey,
He touched the tender stops of *various quills*,
With eager thought, warbling his Doric lay:
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay;
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue;
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new."

LYCIDAS.

And all was conscièńce and tender heart.

* * * * * * * *

And so discreet and fair of eloquence,
So bènigne and so digne of reverence,
And couldè so the people's heart embrace,
That each her loveth that looketh on her face.

* * * * * * * *

Published was the bounty of her name,
And eke beside in many a region:
If one saith well, another saith the same.

* * * * * * *

There n'as discord, rancour, or heaviness,
In all the land, that she ne could appease,
And wisely bring them all in heartes ease."

CHAUCER.

WILLIAM AND MARY HOWITT.

THE numerous literary labours of William and Mary Howitt, are so inextricably and so interestingly mixed up with their biographies, that they can only be appropriately treated under one head.

William Howitt is a native of Derbyshire, where his family have been considerable landed proprietors for many generations. In the reign of Elizabeth a Thomas Howitt, Esq., married a Miss Middleton, and on the division of the estate, of which she was co-heiress, the manors of Wansley and Eastwood fell to the lot of Mrs. Howitt, who came to reside with her husband at Wansley Hall in Nottinghamshire.

The Howitts—according to a memoir of their early days, now out of print, and of which we shall avail ourselves, as far as it goes, having ascertained its authenticity—the Howitts appear to have been of the old school of country squires, who led a jolly, careless life—hunting, shooting, feasting, and leaving their estate to take care of itself as it might, and which, of course, fell into a steady consumption.

The broad lands of Wansley and Eastwood slipped away piece-meal; Wansley Hall and its surrounding demesne followed; the rectory of Eastwood, which had been a comfortable berth for a younger son, was the last portion of Miss Middleton's dowry which lingered in the family, and that was eventually sold to the Plumtre family, in which it yet remains. The rectors of Eastwood appear, from family documents, to have very faithfully followed out such an education as they may be supposed to have received from their parents. They were more devoted to the field than the pulpit; and the exploits of the last rector of the name of Howitt and old Squire Rolleston, of Watnall, are not yet forgotten.

The demesne of one heiress being dissipated, there was not wanting another with which to repair the waste with her gold. The great-grandfather of our author married the daughter and sole heiress of a gentleman of Nottinghamshire, with whom he received a large sum in money. This was soon spent, and so much was the lady's father exasperated at the hopeless waste of his son-in-law, that he cut off his own daughter with a shilling, and left the estate to an adopted son. The disinherited man did not, however, learn wisdom from this lesson, unless he considered it wisdom "to daff the world aside and let it pass;" he adhered stoutly to the hereditary habits and maxims

of his ancestors; and a wealthy old aunt of his, residing at Derby, getting a suspicion that he only waited her death to squander her hoard too, adopted the stratagem of sending a messenger to Heanor to announce to him the melancholy intelligence of her decease. The result justified her fears. The jolly squire liberally rewarded the messenger, and setting the village bells a-ringing, began his journey towards Derby to take possession. To his great consternation and chagrin, however, instead of finding the lady dead, he found her very much alive indeed, and ready to receive him with a most emphatic announcement, that she had followed the example of his father-in-law, and had struck him out of her will altogether. She faithfully kept her word. The only legacy which she left to this jovial spendthrift was his great two-handled breakfast pot, out of which he consumed every morning as much toast and ale as would have "filled" a baron of the fourteenth century.

This old gentleman seems to have been not only of a most reckless, but also of an unresentful disposition. He appears to have continued a familiar intercourse with the gentleman who superseded him in the estate, who likewise maintained towards him a conduct that was very honourable. The disinherited squire was one of the true Squire-

Western school, and spent the remainder of his life in a manner particularly characteristic of the times. He and another dilapidated old gentleman of the name of Johnson, used to proceed from house to house amongst their friends, till probably they had scarcely a home of their own, carousing and drinking "jolly good ale and old." They sojourned a long time at one of these places, regularly going out with the greyhounds in the morning, or if it were summer, a-fishing, and carousing in the evenings, till one day the butler gave them a hint, by announcing that "the barrel was out." On this they proceeded to Lord Middleton's, at Wollerton, and after a similar career and a similar carousing, to the house of a gentleman in Lincolnshire. The building of Wollerton Hall, it is said, had considerably impoverished the Middleton family; but Lord Middleton was unmarried; and as the Lincolnshire gentleman had an only daughter and a splendid fortune, family tradition says, that by extolling the parties to each other a match was brought about by these old gentlemen, much to the satisfaction of both sides; and they were made free of the cellar and the greyhounds for the remainder of their lives.

The son of this spendthrift, instead of being possessor of an estate, became a manager of a part of it for the fortunate proprietor. There was, however,

a friendly feeling always kept up between the new proprietors and the Howitts, and by this means the father of our author—who was a man of a different stamp from his progenitors—was enabled, in some degree, to restore the fortunes of the family, and to establish a handsome property. Miss Tantum, whom he married, was a member of the Society of Friends, as her ancestors had been from the commencement of the Society; and Mr. Thomas Howitt, previous to his marriage, as was required by the rules of the Friends, entered the Society, and has always continued in it.

William Howitt, the subject of the present biographical sketch, is one of six brothers. He was educated at different schools of the Friends; but, as we have frequently heard him declare, was much more indebted to a steady practice of self-instruction than to any school or teacher whatever. He early shewed a predilection for poetry, and in a periodical of that day, called "Literary Recreations," a copy of some verses "On Spring" may be found, stated to be by "William Howitt, a boy 13 years of age." During the time that he was not at school, he was accustomed, with his eldest brother, to stroll all over the country, shooting, coursing, and fishing with an indefatigable zeal which would have delighted any of the Nimrods from whom he was descended. As a boy he had been an eager birds'-nester, and these

after-pursuits, together with a strong poetical temperament, and a keen perception of the beauties of nature, made him familiar with all the haunts, recesses, productions, and creatures of the country. In this manner the greatest portion of his early life was spent. After he arrived at manhood, however, those country pleasures were blended with an active study of Chemistry, Botany, Natural and Moral Philosophy, and of the works of the best writers of Italy, France, and his own country. He also turned the attention of his youngest brother, now Dr. Howitt, to the study of British Botany, and the Doctor has since prosecuted it with more constancy and success than himself. General literature, and poetry, soon drew his attention more forcibly, and his marriage, in his twenty-eighth year, no doubt naturally contributed to strengthen this tendency. The lady of his choice was Miss Mary Botham, of Uttoxeter, in Staffordshire, also a member of the Society of Friends, and now familiar to the public as the delightful authoress, Mary Howitt.

Mary Howitt is, by her mother's side, directly descended from Mr. William Wood, the Irish patentee, about whose halfpence, minted under a contract from the Government of George II., Dean Swift raised such a disturbance with his "Drapier's Letters," successfully preventing the issue of the coinage, and saddling Mr. Wood with a loss of 60,000*l.*, Sir

Robert Walpole, the minister, resisting all recompense for his loss, although Sir Isaac Newton, who was appointed to assay the coinage, pronounced it better than the contract required, and Mr. Wood, of course, justly entitled to remuneration.* His son, Mr. Charles Wood, the grandfather of Mrs. Howitt, and who became assay-master in Jamaica, was the first who introduced platinum into Europe.

Mr. Howitt on his marriage went to reside in Staffordshire, and continued there about a year. Mrs. Howitt and himself being of the most congenial taste and disposition, determined to publish jointly a volume of poetry. This appeared under the title of "The Forest Minstrel," in 1823. It was highly applauded by the press, and is sufficiently characteristic of both its writers—the irresistible tendency of one to describe natural scenery, and the legendary propensities of the other.

Soon after their marriage they undertook a walk into Scotland, having long admired warmly the ballad poetry and traditions of that country. In this ramble, after landing at Dumbarton, they went on over mountain and moorland wherever they proposed to go, for one thousand miles, walking more than five hundred of it, Mrs. Howitt performing the journey without fatigue. They crossed Ben Lomond without a guide, and after enjoying the most mag-

* See Ruding's "Annals of Coinage."

nificent spectacle of the clouds alternately shrouding and breaking away from the chaos of mountains around them, were enveloped by a dense cloud, and only able to effect their descent with great difficulty and with considerable hazard. They visited Loch Katrine, Stirling, Edinburgh, and all the beautiful scenery for many miles round it, traversed Fifeshire, and then, taking Abbotsford in their route, walked through the more Southern parts, visiting many places interesting for their historical or poetical associations, on to Gretna-Green, where all the villagers turned out brimfull of mirth, supposing they were come there to be married, especially as they entered the public-house where such matches are completed, and engaged the landlord to put them in the way to Carlisle. They returned by way of the English lakes, having excessively enjoyed their journey.

Soon after their return, they settled in Nottingham; Mr. Howitt, though actively engaged in business, still devoting his leisure to literary pursuits. Here they soon published another joint volume of poems, called "The Desolation of Eyam," which was received with equal favour by the public. The attention which these two volumes excited, brought many applications from the editors of Annuals and Magazines; and both Mr. and Mrs. Howitt for some years contributed a great variety of articles to these publications.

Mr. Howitt possesses such versatility that there are few quarters of literature in which his contributions would not equal the best. His papers in the "Heads of the People" were excellent. Mrs. Howitt's ballads have the true ballad spirit, and some of them are of exceeding sweetness. Her simplicity is without feebleness, and her occasional openings into power are striking and noble. Many of her finest poems are scattered abroad in annuals and magazines. They would make a most delightful volume if collected, and one which the public would not be slow to appreciate.

The circumstance of their names having become attached to so many separate articles, now led to a separate publication of volumes. Mrs. Howitt's dramatic poem of "The Seven Temptations," was well received by all lovers of poetry; but the public often need time properly to estimate the best works of an author.

Within the last half century a somewhat new class of writing has been introduced into this country with great success, and most fortunately for the public taste, as its influence is most healthy and sweet, most refreshing and soothing, most joyous, yet most innocent. It is that of the unaffected prose pastoral. After Sir Philip Sidney's "Arcadia," there was no work which had so much of this spirit of the green fields and woods, as Walton's "Complete Angler."

Half a century then intervened, and the same feeling can hardly be said to have shewn itself, until the time of Lady Winchelsea; again some fifty years intervened, and we had Burns, and soon afterwards Charlotte Smith, and then Wordsworth, and Keats, in poetry, and Miss Mitford and Leigh Hunt in prose. The numerous essays and delightful papers of Leigh Hunt, and one little work in particular, entitled "The Months,"—together with the pastoral sketches of "Our Village," "Belford Regis," and "Country Stories," are known to all. These works of Miss Mitford, if read by snatches, come over the mind as the summer air and the sweet hum of rural sounds would float upon the senses through an open window in the country; leaving with you for a whole day, a tradition of fragrance and dew. It is hardly necessary to add, that her prose pastorals are all redolent of a cordial and cheerful spirit. They are the poetry of matter-of-fact nature, fresh and at first hand. Who would not fain leave their other matters-of-fact, to go with these writers to gather lilies of the valley from the deep green woods? Sooth to say, if the seasons in England were always as they paint them, we should all choose to live out of doors, and nobody would catch cold.

Miss Mitford is undoubtedly at the head of this delightful, and at present "small family" of prose pastoral writers. William and Mary Howitt

naturally belong to it; and if another were to be named of the present time, it would be Thomas Miller. But no one has done so much, systematically, and extensively to make us familiar with the rural population both of our own country and of Germany, as Mr. Howitt.

In 1832, Mr. Howitt produced the "Book of the Seasons," a volume the publication of which was attended by a circumstance curious in itself, and which should teach young authors not to be discouraged by the opinions of publishers. The "Book of the Seasons," was offered to four of the principal publishing houses and rejected by them; till the author, in disgust, told the gentleman in whose hands it was left, to tie a stone to the MS., and fling it over London Bridge. At length Colburn and Bentley took it: the press with one simultaneous cheer of approbation saluted its appearance; it has since gone through seven large editions.

In 1834, Mr. Howitt published a work of a very different description, the "History of Priestcraft," which ran through six or seven editions, some of them of 3000 copies each. The work, of course, excited as much reprehension from one party as applause from another; but the readers of the "Book of the Seasons," which is full of kindly and gentle feelings, could not comprehend how the same spirit could produce both these works. The union is, never-

theless, perfectly compatible. It should be recollected that Mr. Howitt was born and educated a Quaker, and he had imbued himself with the writings and spirit of the first Quakers, who were a sturdy race, and suffered much persecution from the Established Church.

In 1835,our author published "Pantika, or Traditions of the most Ancient Times," a work of imagination, certainly the most ambitious, and not the least successful, though the least popular of all Mr. Howitt's many admirable productions. But its design, its materials and execution are altogether so different from every other work of the Howitts, that its claims will be more appropriately considered under the head of "Mrs. Shelley, and the imaginative romance writers," in Vol. II. of the present work.

The publication of the "History of Priestcraft" may be said to have driven our author from Nottingham. Till then he lived in great privacy; but this volume discovered to his townsmen that he possessed political opinions. He appeared then as the advocate of popular rights, and in that town there is a considerable portion of the population which has always been greatly in want of zealous and able leaders. These seized on Mr. Howitt as a champion unexpectedly found. He was in a manner forced at once, and contrary to his habits and inclination, into public life. He was called upon to arrange and

address public meetings. He was made an alderman of the borough, and looked to as the advocate of all popular measures. It was found that, although unused to public speaking, he possessed a vehement eloquence which excited his hearers to enthusiasm, and carried them according to his will. A speech of his in the Town Hall, on some Irish question, in which he introduced some remarks on O'Connell, so agitated his hearers, that they simultaneously announced their determination to invite O'Connell to a public dinner, which they forthwith did. It was hoped by the people of Nottingham that they had found a man amply capable and willing to advocate their interests; but this was not the life which Mr. Howitt had marked out for himself. No sphere could have afforded a greater opportunity of doing good to his fellow-men than the one he now occupied, but to do that it required an independent fortune. Mr. Howitt's was limited; and finding his time and energies wholly absorbed by extraneous circumstances, he deemed it his duty to his children to withdraw to a more secluded place of residence. He therefore removed to Esher, in Surrey, a place which gave him the fullest retirement, in a beautiful country, while it afforded a ready communication with the metropolis. There he resided some years.

Before leaving Nottingham, his fellow-townsmen, in a very numerous public meeting, voted him a silver

inkstand, as an appropriate testimony of their esteem; and, before settling at Esher, he and Mrs. Howitt made another excursion into the North of England, Scotland, and the Western Isles, traversing the most interesting portions of their journey again on foot. They spent a short time with Mr. Wordsworth and his family at Rydal, and in Edinburgh made the personal acquaintance of most of the literary and eminent characters there. Mr. Howitt also attended a dinner given by the city of Edinburgh to the poet Campbell, and being requested to give as a toast "the English poets, Wordsworth, Southey, and Moore," he took the opportunity of pressing on the attention of that brilliant company, that if toasting poets did them honour, the true way to serve them was to secure them their "copy-right."

During Mr. Howitt's residence at Esher, he published the "Rural Life of England," having previously traversed the country literally from the Land's End to the Scottish borders, to make himself intimately acquainted with the manners and mode of life of the rural population. The work is eminently popular; and while it is full of the kindly and cheerful spirit of the "Book of the Seasons," has yet higher claims to public favour even than that most pleasant work, from the more exalted nature of its subject, and the enlightened and philosophical views which it takes of society generally.

In 1838, Mr. Howitt published a work entitled "Colonization and Christianity," a popular history of the treatment of the natives by the Europeans in all their colonies; a work which proves that the writer's philanthropic sympathy is not confined to any race or nation, and unfolds a dark chapter in the history of human nature, and which could hardly fail to produce the most extensive and beneficial effects. In fact, the reading of this volume led Mr. Joseph Pease, Sen., immediately to establish "The British India Society," in which the zealous exertions of Mr. Pease have mainly contributed to the adoption of a new policy by the East India Company, pregnant with the most important benefits to this country;—to the liberation of all their slaves, no less than *ten millions* in number, and to the cultivation of cotton, sugar, and other tropical articles for our market, by which, if continued, not only will the poor population of India be employed, but the manufacturing millions of our own country too, by the constant demand for our manufactured goods; of which every year already brings the most striking and cheering evidences.

Soon after this, Mr. Howitt put forth a little book, which has gladdened many a fireside, called "The Boys' Country Book," a genuine life of a country boy — being evidently his own life. The Boys' Country Book was followed by "Visits to Remark-

able Places, Old Halls, Battle Fields, and Scenes illustrative of striking Passages in English History and Poetry." This book was received with enthusiasm; and though an expensive work, had a large sale, and was followed by a second volume. These works soon found a host of imitators, and have had the beneficial effect of reminding the public of the valuable stores of historic and poetic interest scattered over the whole face of our noble country. Mrs. Howitt's attention had for years been turned to works for the young. They were written for the amusement and benefit of her own children, and being tested by the actual approbation of this little domestic auditory, were afterwards published and received with equal applause by the young wherever the English language extends.* Translations of "Birds and Flowers," are in progress both in German and Polish, and all the works of William and Mary

* Up to this period Mrs. Howitt had issued;—The Sketches of Natural History.—Tales in Verse; and Tales in Prose.—Birds and Flowers.—Hymns and Fireside Verses. The popularity of these works induced a publisher (Mr. Tegg) to propose to Mrs. Howitt to write for him a series of "Tales for the People and their Children;" of which ten volumes have already appeared, namely;—1. Strive and Thrive.—2. Hope on, Hope ever.—3. Sowing and Reaping.—4. Who shall be Greatest?—5. Which is the Wiser?—6. Little Coin much Care.—7. Work and Wages.—8. Alice Franklin.—9. Love and Money. These volumes have never been introduced to the public by reviews, and it seems to be a system of Mr. Tegg's never to send copies to reviews; nevertheless they have had a vast circulation, and are scattered all over America in six-penny reprints. They are in themselves a little juvenile library of the most interesting narratives, full of goodness of heart, and sincere moral principles.

Howitt are immediately reprinted and extensively circulated in America.

Having resided about three years at Esher, Mr. and Mrs. Howitt quitted England for a sojourn in Germany. They had for some time had their attention drawn to German literature; and the alleged advantages attending education in Germany, made them resolve to judge for themselves. Attracted by the beauty of the scenery, they took up their head-quarters at Heidelberg, where their children could steadily pursue their education. Thence, at different times, they visited nearly every part and every large city of Germany, assiduously exerting themselves by social intercourse with the people, as well as by study, to make themselves perfectly familiar with the manners, spirit, and literature of that great and varied nation. During upwards of three years thus spent, with the exception of Mrs. Howitt's continuing the series of "Tales for the People," and editing "Fisher's Drawing-Room Scrap-Book," which was put into her hands on the decease of L. E. L., English literature was now abandoned for the continuous study of the German. The result on Mr. Howitt's part was the translation of a work written expressly for him, "The Student-Life of Germany," containing the most famous songs and music of the German students. This volume, which was vehemently attacked by some of our own news-

papers, nevertheless received from the principal journals of Germany, the highest testimonies of accuracy and mastership of translation, and led to numerous applications on the part of German publishers for translations of works into English, as books for the use of students of English, one only of which, however, Mr. Howitt found time to undertake,—the fanciful story of Peter Schlemil, since published by Schrag of Nürnberg. After three years' abode and observation, Mr. Howitt published his "Social and Rural Life of Germany," which was at once well received here, and reprinted in Germany with the assertion of the "Allgemeine Zeitung," the first critical journal of Germany, of its being the most accurate account of that country ever written by a foreigner.

Perhaps, however, as concerns the English public, the most important consequence of Mr. and Mrs. Howitt's sojourn in Germany is that they had their attention there turned to the languages and literature of the North of Europe. They had the pleasure of becoming intimately acquainted with an excellent and highly-accomplished English family who had spent many years in Sweden, and were enthusiastic lovers of its literature. With them they immediately commenced the study of Swedish, and were so much charmed with its affinity, both in form and spirit to the English, that they pursued it with great avidity.

The first results have been the introduction of the prose tales of Frederika Bremer, by Mrs. Howitt;—a new era in our reading world. These charming works, so distinguished by their novel and natural domestic interest, their faithful delineations, their true spirit of kindliness, high poetical feeling, good sense, and domestic harmony and affection, have produced a sensation unequalled as a series since the issue of the Waverley novels, and in cheap reprints have been circulated through every class and corner of America. Mr. Howitt is understood to assist in these translations.

The last work of Mr. Howitt's, up to this time, is entitled "German Experiences." Many of the complaints it contains are applicable to all countries; and Chap. II. should be greatly modified. He says there, that "in going to Germany it is necessary to think more of the pounds than the poetry!" How very *un*-necessary it is to enforce any such principle upon our countrymen, the author must surely know. What the English *most* need of Germany is its poetry and literature. But notwithstanding this dreadfully John Bullish exhortation, and what else has been objected to, any English travellers going to Germany for the first time should certainly read the book. Above all, our legislators should read it.

The Howitts are enthusiastic lovers of their

literary pursuits, and anxious to educate their children in the best possible manner, and therefore live a retired and domestic life. Though belonging to the Society of Friends, and attached to its great principles of civil, moral, and religious liberty, they have long ago abandoned its peculiarities; and in manners, dress, and language belong only to the world. For the honour of literature we may safely say, that amongst the many consolatory proofs in modern times of how much literature may contribute to the happiness of life, the case of the Howitts is one of the most striking. The love of literature was the origin of their acquaintance, its pursuit has been the hand-in-hand bond of the most perfect happiness of a long married life; and we may further add, for the honour of womanhood, that while our authoress sends forth her delightful works in unbroken succession, to the four quarters of the globe, William Howitt has been heard to declare that he will challenge any woman, be she who she may, who never wrote a line, to match his good woman in the able management of a large household, at the same time that she fills her own little world of home with the brightness of her own heart and spirit.

DR. PUSEY.

"The angels, in like manner, can utter in a few words singular the things which are written in a volume of any book, and can express such things, or every word, as elevate its meaning to interior wisdom; for their speech is such, that it is consonant with affections, and every word with ideas. Expressions are also varied, by an infinity of methods, according to the series of the things which are in a complex in the thought."

SWEDENBORG, "Concerning the Wisdom of the Angels of Heaven."

DR. PUSEY.

In the vigorous and very ominous contest which has for a considerable time been raging between different sections of the Established Church, it will form no part of this brief notice to engage, on either side. A work like the present cannot, it must be obvious, afford space for lengthy and complex disquisition on any subject; and least of all would its design accord with controversies which are usually, in themselves, endless, whether on matters of religion, science, or politics. A few broad statements of leading principles and facts are all that will be attempted—intended solely for the benefit of those who do not know much of the subject, and have not time to study the "Tracts," but who wish for some concise information.

This necessary avoidance of theological conflicts and the inadmissibility of polemical treatises, must

also prevent our taking into the present paper some account of Dr. Chalmers, the leader of the High Church party in the Presbyterian, as Dr. Pusey is in the Episcopal section of the Protestant Church in this kingdom; and must equally prevent any view of the natural opposites of both these leaders in their theological aspects; otherwise our design must have included the lectures of W. J. Fox, and those of the late Dr. Channing, whose transatlantic birth has not precluded his influence among ourselves. Our purpose, however, being limited to the consideration of certain novel doctrines which have been designated after the name of their originator, the following remarks are offered in elucidation.

Dr. Pusey is the representative of that class of Englishmen, who looking with reprehension and alarm upon the changes in the ecclesiastical and political system of our country which have slowly but constantly gained ground during the lapse of the last fifteen years, have ranged themselves under the freshly emblazoned banners and newly illuminated altars of the Church, have unsheathed the sword of Faith and new interpretation, earnest to restore the ancient constitution in Church and State; to stem the advancing tide of modern opinion and endeavour; to retain the stronghold of the Divine Right of Kings and the Spiritual Supremacy of the Priesthood, and from this detached vantage-ground to say to the rising

waves, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther," and to the troubled waters, "Peace,—be still."

The first note of alarm was sounded to this class when, fifteen years ago, the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Act passed the legislature. This measure (to use the words of a distinguished member of their own body, Mr. Palmer) was, in their eyes, a "cutting away from the Church of England of one of its ancient bulwarks, and evidencing a disposition to make concessions to the clamour of its enemies." In the next year, called by the same authority "the fatal year 1829," they saw the admission of Catholics to posts of trust and responsibility, and to a share in the legislation. The feelings which animated them now, may be understood from the fact that his part in the transaction cost Sir Robert Peel his seat in the University of Oxford, and from the language of the same authority we have already quoted, who described the Emancipation Act as "a measure which scattered to the winds public principle, public morality, public confidence, and dispersed a party, which, had it possessed courage to act according to its old and popular principles, and to act on them with manly energy, would have stemmed the torrent of revolution and averted the awful crisis which was at hand." Such was the state of appalled apprehension on which the tocsin of revolution in France struck like an electric shock in 1830, and on which the echoes rever-

berated nearer and nearer thunders through the reform agitation in England. "The Tory aristocracy," says Mr. Palmer again, "which had forsaken the Church in yielding Emancipation, were now hurled from their political ascendancy, and the REFORM BILL of 1831—a just retribution for their offence—made for the time the democratic principle all powerful in the state." Events glided on. The claims of the Dissenters were loudly urged—a severance of Church and State was demanded—ten Irish Bishoprics were suppressed—even Church Rates were in many quarters successfully resisted—and CHURCH REFORM was actually called for, much in the same manner in which Parliamentary Reform had been demanded a year or two before! Struck by these signs of the times, by the increase of dissent, the avowedly low views of church authority entertained by a majority of the clergy and nearly the entire body of the laity, the extreme laxity of discipline and great diversity of doctrine prevailing in the Church, and the tendency to further innovation manifesting itself in many, and those not unimportant quarters, a few clergymen, chiefly residing at Oxford and members of the University, formed themselves into an association under the title of "Friends of the Church." At the head of these was Dr. Pusey.

Edward Bouverie Pusey is the second son of the late Hon. Philip Pusey, and grandson of the Earl of

Radnor. His father assumed the name of Pusey on becoming the possessor of Pusey, in the county of Berks, an estate held by that family from a period considerably anterior to the Norman conquest, and held under a grant from Canute by *cornage*, or the service of a horn. The Pusey horn is well known to antiquaries. Dr. Pusey was born in 1800, and entered the University of Oxford in 1818, as a gentleman commoner of Christ Church. His name appears in the first class in 1822. Shortly afterwards he became a fellow of Oriel College; in 1824 he obtained the prize for the Latin essay, and in 1828 he became Regius Professor of Hebrew and Canon of Christ Church. In this year he married a lady, since deceased. In 1825 he had taken the degree of M.A., and at the usual periods subsequently took those of B.D. and D.D. Dr. Pusey is therefore in his 45th year. He is somewhat under the middle size, pale, and of a meditative and intellectual countenance. As a preacher, he is calm, logical and persuasive, and there is an air of sincerity about every word which he utters which is never without its effect. His theological views were at one time supposed to be verging towards those of the German theologians, but they underwent a very decided change before the year 1833, when he became one of the founders of the association, out of which sprang the "Tracts for the Times."

The first object of this association was to stir up clergy and laity to activity and to more zeal for the office and authority of the Church, and this was done by correspondence, addresses, associations and similar means, with very satisfactory results. But inasmuch as it was by the press that opposite principles had been most successfully inculcated, so the leading members of that society determined to issue some short publications adapted, as they considered, to the exigencies of the times. These publications were not sent forth with any corporate authority. The writers spoke only their own individual opinions, and no system of revision, though often recommended, was ever adopted. The title given to them was "Tracts for the Times, by members of the University of Oxford." Some were addressed especially to the clergy, and headed "*ad clerum*," others to the laity, headed "*ad populum*," others to both.

The tenets maintained by the Tract writers were chiefly as follows. They asserted the three-fold order of ministry, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, as essential to an apostolic church. They claimed a personal, not a merely official, descent from the Apostles, *i. e.*, they declared that not only had the Church ever maintained the three orders, but that an unbroken succession of individuals canonically ordained was enjoyed by the Church and essential to her existence; in short, that without this there could be *no Church*

at all. They held the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, of sacramental absolution, and of a real, in contradistinction to a figurative or symbolical, PRESENCE in the Eucharist. They maintained the duty of fasting, of ritual obedience, and of communion with the Apostolic Church, declaring all Dissenters, and, as a necessary consequence, the members of the Church of Scotland, and all churches not episcopal, to be members of no church at all. They denied the validity of Lay-baptism; they threw out hints from time to time, which evidenced an attachment to the theological system supported by the non-juring divines in the days of James II.; and the grand protestant principle as established by Luther—the right of private interpretation of Holy Scripture—they denied.

A facetious, but somewhat profane Letter, shortly appeared, purporting to be "an Epistle from THE POPE to certain members of the University of Oxford," and was extensively circulated. Dr. Pusey replied to this highly reprehensible Pretender, in a grave and earnest tone, deprecating a light and irreligious spirit on a topic of so great magnitude and importance.

The Evangelical party in the Church next objected to certain expressions used in the "Tracts," such as "conveying the sacrifice to the people"—"entrusted with the keys of Heaven and Hell"—"entrusted with the awful and mysterious *gift of making the bread and wine, Christ's body and blood*"—all which

expressions they considered might perhaps be understood in *rather* a Romanizing way. "The Record," a religious newspaper, conducted by gentlemen of Presbyterian tenets, but circulating chiefly among churchmen of Calvinistic doctrine, directly accused the Tract writers as Jesuits, and covert Papists. The conduct of the Bishops, who were supposed to favour Dr. Pusey, was watched, their dinner-parties noted, and the disposal of their patronage tartly commented on. The inferior clergy were subjected to espionage. If a priest or deacon was seen at a ball or concert, his name was sure to appear in the next week's "Record" as a musical or a dancing clergyman, and a Puseyite; for the term "*Puseyite*" originated with this journal. The Tracts meanwhile went steadily on, never replying nor recriminating, but continuing to put forth new and more startling deviations from the received theology of the day.

In 1836, a new species of hostility commenced, in which the Puseyite party were the assailants. Dr. Hampden, canon of Christ Church, and Principal of St. Mary Hall, was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity. The admirable personal qualities, and the splendid abilities of Dr. Hampden, made *the man* both admired and esteemed; but he had preached a course of Bampton Lectures which were considered "rationalistic"—or tending to a daring use of the rational faculty, (in the German sense) and had published a

pamphlet; in which, says Mr. Palmer, "the boldest latitudinarianism was openly avowed, and Socinians were placed on a level with all other Christians!" His appointment was therefore vigorously opposed by the high Church party; but the opposition being fruitless, an agitation was commenced chiefly by the Tract writers, and a formal censure of the University on Dr. Hampden was passed by an overwhelming majority in Convocation. By this censure, the Margaret Professor of Divinity was substituted for the Regius Professor, and the attendance of the under graduates on the latter, dispensed with.

Periodicals were now started with the avowed object of opposing the "Tracts;" and one, "The Church of England Quarterly Review," was alluded to in the House of Commons, and had two articles, which were marked by vehement invective, quoted in "The Times." That paper, however, subsequently discovering certain inaccuracies, repudiated the articles in question. Thus attacked, the Oxford party resolved to have an organ of their own; and the "British Critic" being at that moment thrown into the market, Dr. Pusey became the purchaser, and placed in the post of editor, Mr. Newman, the most learned, the most astute, and the most practised in controversy of all concerned in the tracts. At the same time, Professor Sewell took up their cause in the Quarterly Review.

The singular book called "Froude's Remains," edited by Mr. Newman, has been excused by moderate writers as having been the result of prolonged bad health; but as its editor gravely answered in print, that "Mr. Froude was not a man who said anything at random," the supposition, one would think, can scarcely be justified. The author, among many other similar expressions, spoke of himself and his coadjutors as organizing "a conspiracy for the *unprotestantizing* of the Church;"—he called the Reformation "A limb badly set, which required to be broken again;" and wondered that "* * * did not get on faster to hate the reformers."

The first learned opposition which the Tractarians had to encounter was in the work of Dr. Mc Ilvaine, Bishop of Vermont, in America. In the same year, 1840, the "Church of England Quarterly" passed into other management, and maintained a firm, consistent opposition to the same writers, uniformly, however, treating them as gentlemen, scholars, and Christians. In April, 1843, it was, however, again placed under its former conductors.

Meanwhile the Tracts themselves had been silenced, the Bishop of Oxford having recommended their cessation, and been promptly obeyed. The last of the series, the celebrated No. 90,* which was

* The tract called "One Tract More," printed subsequently to No. 90, was written by a well-known poet, and M.P. *Keble, etc.*

avowed by Mr. Newman, was pointedly condemned by many of the Bishops, and a note of censure passed on it by the Hebdomadal Board. Books, sermons, reviews, charges, memoirs from the Puseyite party, have since manifested their determination to continue to be heard through the press.

The excitement was increased by the charge of the Bishop of London in 1842, in which he touched on some points of ritual observance, apparently favouring the Puseyites. A professor of poetry, who never published a single poetical work, has been elected at Oxford, "because he was not a Puseyite." Mr. Gladstone's two works, "On the Relation of the Church to the State," and "Church Principles," were attacked as Puseyite, and Mr. Christmas's treatise on the "Discipline of the Anglican Church," though touching on no disputed point of doctrine, afforded matter of criticism for six weeks to a Presbyterian journal on the same ground. Old Divinity was now remembered with affection. Societies for the publication of neglected old divinity have been established, and also, rival societies of Anglo-Catholic theology. As a good influence, may be noticed the impulse to correct Gothic Architecture, to the employment of art in the embellishment of churches, and the improvement of the musical part of the service. As evidences of dissension, we observe, one rector advertising for a curate, with —"No Puseyite need

apply ;"—another, "No Oxford man will be accepted ;" on the other hand, a vicar "wants an assistant of sound Anglican views, who is untainted with Erastianism, and entertains no objection to the daily service, the weekly offertory, and to preaching in a surplice !" Thus, are the very bowels of Mother Church inflamed and convulsed.

The last public act of Dr. Pusey was the delivery of a sermon before the University, in which he was accused of advancing the doctrine of transubstantiation. Judges appointed by the University have censured him; passed a sentence of suspension on him, and condemned the sermon as heretical; but his friends maintain, that by not specifying their grounds, the judges have laid themselves open to the charges of unfairness and severity. It is much to be feared that these doings closely resemble many things which may be discovered as far back as the times of Abailard and St. Bernard.

It is said that Dr. Pusey is about to quit Oxford, and to take up his residence at Leeds, where a superb church is in process of erection for his ministry.

G. P. R. JAMES, MRS. GORE, CAPTAIN MARRYATT,

AND MRS. TROLLOPE.

"And what *of* this new book, that the whole world make such a rout about?"

STERNE.

"How delightful! To cut open the leaves, to inhale the fragrance of the scarcely-dry paper, to examine the type, to see who is the printer, to launch out into regions of thought and invention, (never trod till now,) and to explore characters, (that never met a human eye before,) this is a luxury worth sacrificing a dinner-party, or a few hours of a spare morning to. If we cannot write ourselves, we become by busying ourselves about it, a kind of accessaries after the fact."

HAZLITT.

"No sooner did the Housekeeper see them than she ran out of the room in great haste, and immediately returned with a pot of holy water and a bunch of hyssop, and said, 'Signor Licentiate, take this and sprinkle the room, lest some enchanter, of the many these books abound with, should enchant us, in revenge for what we intend to do in banishing them out of the world!' The Priest smiled at the Housekeeper's simplicity, and ordered the Barber to reach him the books, one by one, that they might see what they treated of; for, perhaps they might find some that did not deserve to be chastised by fire." DON QUIXOTE.

G. P. R. JAMES,—MRS. GORE,—CAPTAIN MARRYATT, AND MRS. TROLLOPE.

PROSE fiction has acquired a more respectable status within the last half century than it held at any previous period in English literature. Very grave people, who set up to be thought wiser than their neighbours, are no longer ashamed to be caught reading a novel. The reason of this is plain enough. It is not that your conventional reader has abated a jot of his dignity, or relaxed a single prejudice in favour of "light reading," but that the novel itself has undergone a complete revolution. It is no longer a mere fantasy of the imagination, a dreamy pageant of unintelligible sentiments and impossible incidents; but a sensible book, insinuating in an exceedingly agreeable form—just as cunning physicians insinuate nauseous drugs in sweet disguises—a great deal of useful knowledge, historical, social, and moral. Most people are too lazy to go to the

spring-head, and are well content to drink from any of the numerous little rills that happen to ripple close at hand; and thus, by degrees, the whole surface becomes fertilized after a fashion, and by a remarkably easy and unconscious process. Formerly, a novel was a laborious pretext for saying a wonderful variety of fine silly things; now, it is really a channel for conveying actual information, the direct result of observation and research, put together with more or less artistic ingenuity, but always keeping in view the responsibility due to the living humanity from which it professes to be drawn. Genteel amenities and pathetic bombast are gone out; and even the most exquisite universalities of the old school have been long since shot with the immense mass of rubbish under which they were buried. Crebillon himself slumbers in the dust of the well-stocked library, while there is no end to the new editions of Scott.

This elevation of prose fiction to a higher rank, and the extension of the sphere of its popularity, may be at once referred to the practical nature of the materials with which it deals, and the sagacity with which they are selected and employed. What Aristotle says of poetry in general may be applied with peculiar force to this particular form of narrative—that it is more philosophical than history; for while the latter is engaged with literal details of

particular facts, which often outrage general probability and never illustrate general principles, the former generalizes throughout, and by tracing in natural sequence a course of causes and effects which would, in all probability, have succeeded each other in the same order, under similar circumstances, in real life, it exhibits a more comprehensive picture of human nature, and conducts us upon the whole to a profounder moral. If the flippant observation be true, that History is Philosophy teaching by example, then it must be admitted that she sometimes teaches by very bad examples; but when she condescends to teach through the medium of fiction, she certainly has no excuse for not selecting the best.

The attempt to establish a sort of junction between history and romance—the Amandas and the Marguerites of Valois, the half-fabulous Rolands and the veritable Richards,—was a lucky conception. We have not the least notion to whom the honour of having originated the historical novel fairly belongs. Certainly not to Scott, to whom it is so commonly attributed. Miss Lee was beforehand with him, and Miss Porter, and twenty others—to say nothing of De Foe, who seems to have given a broad hint of the practicability of such a project in two or three of his inimitable fact-fiction memoirs. We suspect that the idea of the historical novel grew up slowly, that nobody had the courage to make so free with

history all at once, and that it became developed at last only by the sheer necessity of devising something new, consequent upon the exhaustion of every existing mode of fiction. The germ of this brave conception, if we were disposed to pursue the enquiry in a learned spirit, might, perhaps, be found in the Ethiopics of Heliodorus, which dates so far back as the fourth century, and which is in some sort historical, since it presents an accurate and curious picture of the customs of ancient Egypt.* But we have no occasion to travel into such remote paths of investigation. With Froissart and Monstrelet before us, the "Helden Buch," the "Nibelungen Lied," the "Chronicles of the Cid," and the old Spanish and French romances, we can be at no loss to discover how the historical novel gradually put forth its strength and enlarged its stature, until in course of time it grew to its present height and importance. The poetical spirit in which the chronicle writers treat the best established historical reputations, the atmosphere of imagination they throw round the most ordinary facts, and the skill with which they relate their narratives, mingling the dramatic *tact* of the *raconteur* with the sobriety of the historian, may be regarded as having accomplished the first grand

* The "Cyropædia" of Xenophon has a still earlier claim; but either of these derivations makes the historical fiction coincident with the origin of prose romance. Madame de Genlis, in her "Memoires," claims precedence of Scott, who she says was her imitator.—Ed.

advance towards the disputed boundary. The subsequent progress was easy enough; nor can it be a matter of much surprise, when once the invasion was fairly effected, to find the two hitherto distinct races mixed and confounded together on the frontier of the two hitherto hostile territories. If there be romance writers who have taken upon themselves the functions of history, it cannot be denied, on the other hand, that there are historians who have not hesitated to appear in the masquerade of romance.

Of all historical novelists, Scott justly occupies the first place. If he did not create that kind of composition, he was the first who brought it into general favour. The secret was no sooner unfolded, by which the annals of nations could thus be rendered tributary to the most fascinating shapes of romance, than hundreds of imitators started up. Everybody thought he could write an historical novel, and accordingly there was not a nook or corner of history that was not ransacked for materials. Nor was this excitement confined merely to England. It rapidly spread over every part of the civilized world, and seized upon every language that had a printing-press to give utterance to its inspirations. Even bleak and uncultivated Norway is warmed into enthusiasm by the genius of Ingemann, and Russia herself, whose national literature is scarcely half a

century old, boasts of her own especial Walter Scott, with some dozens of followers trooping at his heels.

It is not too much to say that the most successful of those who have trodden the same track in England, is G. P. R. James.* There is no writer, of his particular class, now living, so familiar to the public at large; not one who has drawn so extensively upon sources not always accessible to the readers of novels; not one who has laboured with such unremitting diligence, and such uniform popularity. If he has never greatly succeeded, we know no instance in which he has greatly failed.

The voluminousness—we choose the word advisedly for the occasion—of Mr. James's writings is the idea instantly suggested to the mind upon the bare mention of his name. The first thing you think of is the enormous quantity of books he has written. You fancy a man seated at a table in the centre of a commodious library, with the gift of perpetual motion in his wrist, as incapable of fatigue in brains or fingers as the steam-apparatus that hatches eggs, and possessed with a terrible determination of blood to the head—relieving itself instinctively by a fearful resolution to write on—on—on—during *secula seculorum*, at all hazards to gods, men and columns,

* Mr. James may be, numerically, the most popular of all the historical romancists, but we are far from considering him as the equal of the author of "Rienzi" and the "Last Days of Pompeii."—Ed.

"till the great globe itself, &c." Fifty other strange notions of a like bewildering kind rise up and surround this image of an inexhaustible author; and the more you attempt to close with the phenomenon, the more incomprehensible it becomes, like a dim perplexing figure in a dream.

We have not the means of verifying the number of Mr. James's publications, nor the period within which they were produced. But, we believe, we are sufficiently accurate for general purposes in saying that he commenced his career about fifteen years ago, and that from that time to the present, he has published nearly two novels, or histories, annually. In a catalogue of works pirated from English authors by Baudry of Paris, dated 1841, we find no less than twenty-one substantial three-volumed novels by Mr. James, which the worthy smuggler, having no duty to pay for copy-right, is enabled to offer to the travelling English, and the travelled French, at the small charge of five francs each work. Mr. James has suffered heavily by this nefarious system of literary plunder; and to his incessant exertions for the protection of English copy-rights we are mainly indebted for the small amount of security we now enjoy through the vigilance of the custom-house officers. All that can be done in the absence of a law of international copy-right, is to prevent the importation of these swindling editions; and this, we

believe, is now done as carefully as such an office can be expected to be fulfilled by the class of persons to whom it is unavoidably entrusted.

The French catalogue to which we have referred, is of course a very imperfect guide to Mr. James's complete works; but it will help the imagination a little on the way. In addition to all these novels, there are yet to be piled up histories and biographies of every class and kind, so that by the time we shall have arrived at the top of the heap, we shall be well disposed to stop and vent our wonder in one long heave of respiration. If all these works were gathered together, and a scrivener employed to copy them, it would probably occupy him a longer period of fair average daily labour in the simple task of transcription than the author expended upon their composition. To those who know how much more rapidly the invention works than the hands—how immeasurably the brain outstrips the mechanical process of the pen—this assertion will neither be new nor surprising. Yet still there remains behind this problem,—how Mr. James, although he might compose faster than another person could copy, contrived both to compose and write so much within so short a period? But the problem is set at rest by the fact that Mr. James did not *write* any of his works. Like Cobbett, he employs an amanuensis, and all this long and brilliant array of historical nar-

ratives with which the public have been so pleasantly entertained for such a series of years, have been dictated by the author, while he was walking up and down his study, one after another, or, sometimes, possibly, two or three at a time!

The usages of authors are proverbially capricious. Cuvier, says "Punch," (and "Punch" is as good an authority in such matters as Bayle or Johnson,) used to dip his head and feet into cold water while he was preparing his great work, the "Règne Animal!" There is no reason on earth why Mr. James should not dictate his novels, if the habit suits and pleases him. But to one who is not in the habit of dictating novels, the process seems peculiarly unfavourable to the due attainment of the end proposed. One can understand Cobbett's dictation—its uses and abuses. The dashing articles of the "Register" are distinguished by the heedless energy and volubility of impromptu. It is the very style adapted for quick popular effects—to be read on the sudden, and set the head whirling, and the hand aching for a petition to sign, or a second Peterloo; just the sort of headlong accumulation of facts and accusations a popular leader, who thoroughly understood the elements he had to wield, and who possessed a genius capable of moulding them to his purpose, might pour out with the greatest imaginable triumph. All this is intelligible enough; but the application

of the same method of composition to the machinery and conduct of a narrative romance is inexplicable. The necessity of carrying on the plot by constant references to past scenes, of anticipating events in some cases, and preparing for them in all; and of working up carefully and by reiterated touches in dialogue and action, the delicate and shifting traits of character, so as to preserve the consistency and dramatic integrity of the general design; these necessities, and many more which might be easily pointed out in the structure of a well-considered novel, would seem to render it nearly impossible to deliver orally three volumes of such matter, so connected and continuous, so reticulated and arranged, so true to life, so varied, and so artistical, in form, movement, and treatment. It is almost impossible to imagine any man *speaking* a novel. Yet Mr. James constantly performs this curious feat—more curious to our apprehension a hundred times than if he were to write his novels in his sleep.

One obvious advantage of this improvisation is, that it has enabled the author to carry on his labours with that marvellous celerity to which we are indebted for the amazing quantity. It is not likely that he could have produced so much in so short a period, had he been held in check by the slower process of pen and ink, with all its provoking suggestiveness, its eye-traps at every turn of a sen-

tence, its awkward gaps, and hitches, and flaws of style, to the mending of which thought and spirit are so frequently sacrificed. On the other hand, it may be reasonably doubted whether what might have been thus lost in quantity might not have been gained in quality. If he had written less he would have written better—there would have been more ultimate purpose in his writings, more condensation, vigour, and vitality.

We are very far from thinking that quantity is an argument, *a priori*, against the originality or strength of genius. It is a common notion to suppose that he who writes a great deal must necessarily dilute and weaken his resources; that writing upon a variety of subjects, it is impossible to write well upon any. This is a vulgar error of the most ignorant kind. He who can write well upon only one subject, or whose capacity cannot accomplish more than a little upon any, is not very likely to be mistaken by the world for a genius. The greatness of the intellect consists as much in its fullness as its profundity. The most remarkable authors in all ages have been amongst the most prolific—instance, Chaucer, Voltaire, Dryden, Swift, Lope de Vega, Goethe, Scott, &c. But there is no universal *dictum* on the subject; each case must be determined finally by the character of the productions themselves. Copiousness without power is mere mental imbecility—drivelling upon paper.

It is not entirely, therefore, because Mr. James has written so much, that we think he might have done better had he written less. The manner of composition has had something to do with it, and is mainly answerable for that uniformity of style, that smooth onward flat over which the narrative rolls with such regularity, and that want of compactness in details, which, with all our admiration of the versatile talents of the author, we constantly feel in these very clever and very numerous novels. If he had not drawn so extensively upon history, and availed himself so largely of characters whose lineaments were already familiar to the reader, these deficiencies would have been still more apparent. But, fortunately, the reader is enabled by his previous knowledge to fill up many of the faint and hasty outlines of the author, an involuntary process which frequently atones for the short-comings of the fiction.

The "fatal facility" of these novels must be apparent to the most superficial critic. It is impossible not to see that they have been hurried out pell-mell, with wonderful self-reliance and an almost constitutional contempt of system and responsibility. The fluency of the manner is not more palpable than the diffusiveness of the matter. The figures are in eternal motion; the dialogue seems everlasting; the descriptions have the breadth and incoherency and joyous flush of a stage diorama. The flurry of the

incidents, the number of the characters, and the mass of subordinate details that stifle the main action, leave upon the memory a very confused sense of the particular merits or final aim of the story. Looking back upon the whole series, one is apt, from the homogeneity, or family-likeness, which pervades them, to mistake one for another, to run Darnley into Richelieu, or jumble up De L'Orme with De Leon. This indistinctness arises from want of care and reflection in the preliminary settlement of a definite design. The novel seems to be begun and finished at a single heat, while the first thought was still fresh, and before time had been allowed to examine its capabilities, or shape it to an end. The consequences of this indiscretion rise up in judgment against the author in every page. There is no repose in the action, the portraiture, the embroidery, the scenery, to give leisure for the reader to take in the vital elements of the subject, or for the prominent personages to grow out into their full and natural proportions, and fix themselves calmly, but forcibly, upon his attention.

Novels written upon this plan, or rather absence of plan, may be, as they are, admirable novels of costume; they may even lay claim to the higher distinction of being capital illuminations, worthy of being let into the margin of history; but they must not be confounded with that class of historical or

real-life novels in which all other considerations are subservient to the delineation of human nature.

Fortunately these faults are not of a kind to mar very materially the pleasure of the bulk of novel-readers; who, moreover, find too many sources of rational enjoyment in Mr. James's books not to be ready to compound all their sins of execution for their research and good sense—qualities so very rare in modern fictions.

The historical research evinced in them is very considerable; much more varied and extensive than the author is ever likely to get credit for from the multitude. People are apt to take history in this shape for granted, without troubling themselves to look beyond the page before them for any further satisfaction of their curiosity. But if they were to follow out the suggestions of the narrative, to read up to the point of interest selected by the author, and to render themselves familiar with the life of the period, so as to be able to grasp it in all its aspects, they would begin to perceive that the works which they had been accustomed to regard merely as pleasant pastime, are frequently the fruits of severe investigation. The historical novelist must know a great deal more than he can exhibit in his novels; he must have laid all the adjacent fields of enquiry under tribute, and mastered many details lying outside the topic, time, and country, he has

chosen for his canvass. He cannot *cram* for the occasion. His collateral studies are as indispensable to his purpose as side-lights to the stage where the action would proceed in comparative darkness without them, although they are themselves always kept out of sight.

In this respect Mr. James's novels are entitled to high commendation. They embrace a wide scope of reading, including nearly all ages and countries. Mr. James, indeed, seems to have an especial genius for this discursive style of historical literature, and ranges with equal ease through the camp of Attila and the salons of Louis Quatorze. In French history he is particularly at home; and the whole vocabulary of chivalry is at his fingers' ends. To say that he has not sometimes adapted history to his own ends, would be to claim for him a merit he would scarcely set up for himself; but it may be safely asserted that of all historical novelists he is, beyond comparison, the most faithful and conscientious. He rarely exceeds the fair license of idealizing his materials; he seldom makes his prominent historical personages responsible for public acts which he cannot verify by authorities; and he always presents them in as strict keeping with their admitted lineaments and characteristics, as can reasonably be expected under the new circumstances in which he finds it necessary to place them. For this reason we

prefer his professed fictions to his professed biographies. They are closer to the mark of real life. They bring out the portrait more distinctly, surrounded by accessories that assist us to a more intimate view of its features. The habit of writing fiction has given a dangerous freedom to his manner of dealing with facts, which communicates its influence, more or less, to his purely historical labours. He works up a history in the picturesque spirit of a romance; and, although it is to the full as trustworthy as many much duller works, one cannot help being struck by its deficiencies in closeness of texture and weight of style.

On the other hand, there seems to be no limit to his ingenuity, his faculty of getting up scenes and incidents, dilemmas, artifices, *contre temps*, battles, skirmishes, disguises, escapes, trials, combats, adventures. He accumulates names, dresses, implements of war and peace, official retinues, and the whole paraphernalia of customs and costumes with astounding alacrity. He appears to have exhausted every imaginable "situation," and to have described every available article of attire on record. What he must have passed through—what triumphs he must have enjoyed—what exigencies he must have experienced—what love he must have suffered—what a grand wardrobe his brain must be! He has made some poetical and dramatic efforts; but this

irresistible tendency to pile up circumstantial particulars is fatal to those forms of art which demand intensity of passion. In stately narratives of chivalry and feudal grandeur, precision and reiteration are desirable rather than injurious—as we would have the most perfect accuracy and finish in a picture of ceremonials; and here Mr. James is supreme. One of his court romances is a book of brave sights and heraldic magnificence—it is the next thing to moving at our leisure through some superb and august procession.

All his works, without distinction, are pervaded by moral feeling. There is a soul of true goodness in them — no maudlin affectation of virtue, but a manly rectitude of aim which they derive direct from the heart of the writer. His enthusiastic nature is visibly impressed upon his productions. They are full of his own frank and generous impulses—impulses so honourable to him in private life. Out of his books, there is no man more sincerely beloved. Had he not even been a distinguished author, his active sympathy in the cause of letters would have secured to him the attachment and respect of his contemporaries.

If we had prescribed to ourselves in this desultory criticism anything like a distinct plan, we should be terribly puzzled to assign a satisfactory reason for

turning from Mr. James to Mrs. Gore. They are neither so like nor unlike as that one should be suggestive of the other. But we have no plan at all—beyond that of illustrating two or three popular phases of our prose fiction through two or three of its master-spirits; and the name of Mrs. Gore occurs to us as one of the most conspicuous. Within the last eight or nine years she has distanced nearly all her contemporaries by a rapid succession of some of the most brilliant novels in our language.

The only element we can discover in common between Mr. James and Mrs. Gore, is that marvellous capacity of production by which they are both so well known in the circulating libraries. Wherever you see a board hung out at the door of a provincial or suburban library, containing a list of the last batch of new books, you may be quite certain of finding Mrs. Gore and Mr. James prodigiously distinguished at the head of it in Brobdignagian letters. They are the Penates of the subscription shops. Their "last" is ever fresh and never wanting—when the season sets in, they set in, and as punctually as the booksellers' circular is published, they are published. Whatever irregularities may mark the appearances of Bulwer, or Horace Smith, or Morier, none are perceptible in their appearances. The dead months of the year alone intervene—they are as sure to come out with the earliest spring and

winter advertisements, as the scribe of the mysterious "Evening paper" is sure, by some inexplicable means, to anticipate the merits of every one of Mr. Colburn's new publications.

But accustomed as the public are to this constant and undeviating fertility, they can form, nevertheless, only an imperfect notion of the surprising industry of Mrs. Gore. Apprehensive of risking her well-earned popularity by taxing the indulgence of her admirers too heavily, or, perhaps, of bringing herself within the lash of the old saw, that easy writing is not always the easiest reading, she has given many of her productions to the world anonymously. Many and many a time has some innocent country squire pondered over a new novel with most critical delight, and prophesied a famous literary destiny for its unknown author, little suspecting that it sprang from the well-known "Roman hand" to which he was indebted for a similar pleasure only a week or two before. Publishers have been sometimes compelled to run a race for priority in bringing out her works; so that it has happened that two of her novels, appearing in the same week, have been actually made to oppose each other in the market. Profound must be the arts of the bibliopolic craft by which a woman can thus be turned into her own rival.

In addition to these original productions, acknow-

ledged and unacknowledged, including all sorts of contributions to periodicals, Mrs. Gore has executed some translations from the French, and given several small dramas to the stage; such as the "Maid of Croissy," "The Tale of a Tub," "The Sledge-Driver," &c., all founded upon, if not taken from, French originals. She has also written a comedy called "The School for Coquettes," and others; but they will scarcely increase her reputation. So fluent and spontaneous a writer was not likely to restrain herself within dramatic forms, without losing much of her natural spirit; and she is still less likely ever to subdue her teeming eloquence down to the brevity of expression so essential to what may be properly called dramatic language. She might conceive a comedy admirably in three volumes, but it is nearly impossible she could write one in five acts.

It is well known in the literary circles that Mrs. Gore is the author of that clever, but surpassingly impudent book, "Cecil." We believe she has never avowed it, and has rather, on the contrary, kept up a little mystification about it. But there is really no doubt on the subject. She wrote the story, and Mr. Beckford helped her to the learning. The public have been often perplexed by Mrs. Gore's Greek and Latin, which, although they were never paraded so impertinently as the polyglott pretensions of Lady

Morgan, were still remote enough from the ordinary course of female accomplishments to startle the public. Where they came from on former occasions we know not; but in this instance they may be referred to Mr. Beckford, together with the still more recondite scraps of far-off tongues that are scattered through the work.

"Cecil" is a perfect representation of the worst, but certainly the most dazzling aspect of Mrs. Gore's genius. It abounds in flashy, high-mettled fashionable slang, and is thrown off in such a vein of upsetting egotism, with such a shew of universal knowledge, and in a style of such dashing effrontery, that it carries the multitude fairly off their legs. There never was a novel written at such a slapping pace. The fearlessness of the execution diverts attention from its deficiencies as a work of art, and helps in a great degree to conceal the real poverty of the conception. But books of this class will not endure the test of re-perusal. Their shallowness becomes palpable at the second reading, even to those who have not sufficient discernment to detect it at once.

As there is nothing so intolerable as dullness, so there is nothing so attractive as vivacity. And this is the predominant quality which has ensured the success of "Cecil." The unflagging gaiety by which the story is lighted up, puts the reader into

the best possible humour with himself and the author. When this temper of mutual good-will is attained by any means, the result is safe. But critics must not suffer their judgment to be taken by storm in this way. They must look a little below the surface, and satisfy themselves as to the congruity of the fable, the truthfulness of the characters, and the general bearing of the whole design. To subject the motley "Cecil" to such an ordeal would be an act of great cruelty. It would be the breaking of a very charming butterfly on a wheel of torture. The plot is frequently absurd and sometimes improbable—the prominent figures are at best clever exaggerations of an artificial state of society—and the moral, if that be the right name for the final impression it leaves upon the mind, is an unprofitable exposition of selfishness and sensuality, and of aristocratic talents steeped to rottenness in the most debasing vices. The second series was an attempt to redeem "Cecil," but, like most second series, the experiment was felt on all hands to be a failure.

We have referred to "Cecil" for the purpose of getting rid at once of all our objections to Mrs. Gore as a novelist. Wherever she has elsewhere missed a complete triumph, it has generally arisen from the intrusion of this same spirit of coxcombry. As a painter of society, possessing knowledge of human nature, she leaves the Richardsons and

Brookes far behind. The elasticity of her manner is perfectly unrivalled. If she rarely reaches the quiet humour of Madame D'Arblay, and never realizes the Dutch fidelity of Miss Austen, she preserves, upon the whole, a more sustained flight than either.* Although nearly all her novels belong to the same *genus*, and are minted off with nearly the same pattern, they do not fatigue or disappoint the reader. Their buoyancy imparts to them a perpetual youth.

Mrs. Gore's views of English society are not always founded on actual observation. Sometimes, out of sheer impatience of time and thought, she drops into the old traditions of fashionable life, as they have descended to us in the plays and novels of the last century, making her lords and ladies move about like persons in a masquerade who have come to play allegorical characters and shew off their finery, instead of being engaged in the *bona fide* business of life. Yet she presents this false picture with so much tact and adroitness, and colours it so superbly, that, with all our consciousness of its unreality, we feel it to be irresistibly amusing. Genius alone can thus invest shadows with interest;

* We hardly feel at ease in the above classification of Richardson with the author of the "Fool of Quality." We also think that Miss Austen preserves a very sustained flight: it may be near the ground, but she never flags in a feather.—ED.

and there is a felicity in Mrs. Gore's genius which gives piquancy and effect to everything she touches. When she sets herself in earnest to sketch the aristocracy, she shews how little necessity she has for reflecting in her faithful pages artificial modes that have been long since extinct, or cobweb refinements that never existed. She never succeeds so well as in that class of experiences which come within her own immediate observation. Her gentry are capital. She excels in the portraiture of the upper section of the middle class, just at the point of contact with the nobility, where their own distinguishing traits are modified by the peculiarities of their social position. The firmness and subtlety with which she traces them through all their relations, political and domestic; the almost masculine energy she throws into her vivid details of party intrigue, from the public contentions in parliament to the secret conspiracies of the club and the boudoir; and the consummate sagacity she displays in unveiling to its very household recesses the interior life that pants under all this external tumult, wrong-headed and hollow-hearted, proud, sensitive and irritable—are solid qualities upon which she may safely repose for the verdict of posterity.

Her *parvenues* are quite equal in their way to any examples of the kind in our language, without being degraded by superfluous grossness, or farcical

expedients. They are not labelled like fools and jesters, but made to work out their ends by their own lusty vanities, and by the unsuspecting sincerity with which they eternally strive against the grain of their unfitness. She lets their humanity rise superior to the humour she raises at their expense, and sometimes even flings a tinge of sadness over their hopeless exclusion from the circles to which they aspire. She does not hesitate to exhibit them, on occasion, like the poor Peri crouched at the gate of Paradise with the opal light falling through a chink on her folded wings. She is not unmindful of the pathetic truth that wells up to the surface of all misdirected efforts and false enthusiasm, even through the most ludicrous association of ideas. It is this truth which makes "Don Quixote," to those who perceive its true meaning, one of the most profoundly melancholy books in the world.

If we wanted a complete contrast to Mrs. Gore, we have it at hand in Mrs. Trollope. The class to which she belongs is, fortunately, very small; but it will always be recruited from the ranks of the unscrupulous, so long as a corrupt taste is likely to yield a trifling profit. Her constitutional coarseness is the natural element of a low popularity, and is sure to pass for cleverness, shrewdness, and strength, where cultivated judgment and chaste inspiration would be

thrown away.* Her books of travel are crowded with plebeian criticisms on works of art and the usages of courts, and are doubtless held in great esteem by her admirers, who love to see such things overhauled and dragged down to their own level. The book on America is of a different class. The subject exactly suited her style and her taste, and people looked on at the fun as they would at a scramble of sweeps in the kennel; while the reflecting few thought it a little unfair in Mrs. Trollope to find fault with the manners of the Americans. Happy for her she had such a topic to begin with. Had she commenced her literary career with Austria or France, in all likelihood, she would have ended it there.

But it is to her novels she is chiefly indebted for her current reputation; and it is here her defects are most glaringly exhibited. She cannot adapt herself to the characterization requisite in a work of fiction: she cannot go out of herself: she serves up everything with the same sauce: the predominant flavour is Trollope still. The plot is always preposterous, and the actors in it seem to be eternally bullying each other. She takes a strange delight in the hideous and revolting, and dwells with gusto

* Still, we submit that the critic does not admit enough on the other side. We think Mrs. Trollope *is* clever, shrewd, and strong; as certainly as that Mrs. Gore has a bright wit.—Ed.

upon the sins of vulgarity. Her sensitiveness upon this point is striking. She never omits an opportunity of detailing the faults of low-bred people, and even goes out of her way to fasten the stigma upon others who ought to have been more gently tasselled. Then her low people are sunk deeper than the lowest depths, as if they had been bred in and in, to the last dregs. Nothing can exceed the vulgarity of Mrs. Trollope's mob of characters, except the vulgarity of her select aristocracy. That is transcendent—it caps the climax.

We have heard it urged on behalf of Mrs. Trollope, that her novels are, at all events, drawn from life. So are sign-paintings. It is no great proof of their truth that centaurs and griffins do not run loose through her pages, and that her men and women have neither hoofs nor tails. The tawdriest wax-works, girt up in paste and spangles, are also "drawn from life;" but there ends the resemblance.

Foremost amongst the novelists who really do "draw from life," is Captain Marryatt. Were it necessary to seek any excuse for occasional blemishes in his tales, the best that could be found is, that they are, more or less, indigenous to the soil he turns up. The life-like earnestness of his sketches may generally be urged with confidence in vindication of any faults which may be detected in them by prudish or captious readers. Captain Marryatt is the

antipodes of a fine writer. His English is always rough-cast, and his style frequently crude and slovenly. But this negligence of forms only heightens the substantial interest of the matter. He tells a story like one who has his heart in it, and who is indifferent to every thing but his facts. The veracity of his fictions, if we may use the expression, constitutes their permanent charm.

Few novelists have ever more distinctly shown, that the secret of success in works of this description is close adherence to nature. There are no dramatic perplexities in his books, no fluent descriptions, no turgid appeals to the imagination: his narratives are simple and progressive; he never uses a word more than he actually wants; and the class from which he generally selects his characters, cannot certainly be considered very attractive to the public at large. Yet his novels are read with breathless curiosity in the most refined circles, as well as in those to whose sympathies they are more directly addressed. By what means does he so successfully attain this result? By fidelity to the nature he professes to delineate. There is literally nothing else in his books to fascinate attention. But, then this "like Aaron's serpent swallows up the rest."

Coincident with his inherent truthfulness is the total absence of egotism and affectation. You never feel the author looking in upon you through the

curtains of the story to see how you like him. There is no personal idiosyncrasy thrust upon you; no literary vanity suspending the action to let the author survey himself in the glass; the story predominates to the entire exclusion of the authorship, and might have been written by A. B. or C., as well as by Marryatt, for all the reader has any reason to know.

It is the "one touch of nature," that makes people who are technically ignorant of ships and seamen, and of the seaward life, articulated so correctly in Captain Marryatt's books, feel so strong an interest in the fortunes of his heroes. Their individuality rises up palpably under his hands. The vicissitudes through which they pass may be new and foreign, but their humanity is intelligible and familiar. His characters, whatever may be their rank, are appropriate to the place and business in which they are engaged; they are acting precisely as you would expect such men to act in such circumstances; they are surrounded by the essentials of their condition; and a practical propriety and consistency, the perfection of art in its kind, invariably presides over their language and conduct. You become gradually intimate with them, and are affected at last by a pure sympathy in their way of life; and thus a race, peculiar in itself, and remote

from the daily intercourse of the world, is made to reach and agitate the universal heart.

Of course we do not apply this description indiscriminately to all Captain Marryatt's productions. It must be taken with exceptions; as all criticisms must, that aim at nothing more than to exhibit salient characteristics.

Yours faithfully

T. N. Talfourd

THOMAS NOON TALFOURD.

"A Serjeant of the Lawe, warè and wise,
That often hadde yben at the parvis,
There was also, full riche of excellence.
Discrete he was, and of gret reverence;
He seemed swiche, his wordés were so wise."

CHAUCER.

"And give me stomach to digest this Law,
O sacred Poesy, the queen of souls!
Would men learn but to distinguish spirits,
And set true difference 'twixt those jaded wits
That run a broken pace for common hire,
And the high raptures of a happy muse!—
* * * * * * *
Hence, Law, and welcome, Muses! tho' not rich
Yet are you pleasing: let 's be reconciled!"

BEN JONSON.

THOMAS NOON TALFOURD.

It falls to the lot of very few men to attain eminence in many and various paths. The subject of the present essay, celebrated as an able, accomplished, and conscientious lawyer, an acute critic of independent judgment and generous feelings, an eloquent orator, a consistent legislator, and a dramatic poet, is one of these few who have so signalized themselves.

Thomas Noon Talfourd is a native of Reading. His mother was the daughter of Mr. Thomas Noon, who was for thirty years the minister of the Independent congregation there. Accordingly he was instructed in their strict tenets, and his early education was obtained in their school at Mill-Hill; but being removed to the public grammar school under Dr. Valpy, he there acquired a love of Shakspeare and the drama—forbidden ground to his native sect—and soon adopted the less rigid doctrines of the

Church of England. At the same time he acquired those ardent political feelings, which, tempered by time, he has always since maintained. His poetical talent was developed equally early. In the year 1811, while still at school, he published a volume entitled "Poems on various Subjects." The subjects are interesting, as evincing the character of his thoughts at this early period. One of them, entitled "On the Education of the Poor," and another, "The Union and Brotherhood of Mankind," obtained for him the acquaintance of Joseph Fox, distinguished for his zeal in the cause of education, and this new friend introduced him by letter to Lord (then Mr. Henry) Brougham. He was received by that distinguished individual with the utmost kindness, and encouraged to work his way to the bar through literature. Following this judicious advice, he engaged himself in 1813 to Mr. Chitty for a period of four years.

The literary career of the young lawyer began with an essay published in the "Pamphleteer," early in 1813, entitled "An Appeal to the Protestant Dissenters of Great Britain on behalf of the Catholics." This essay was eloquently written and breathed a spirit of liberality, such as is rightly denominated "Christian." Talfourd was then under eighteen. "A Critical Examination of some objections taken by Cobbett to the Unitarian Relief Bill," was a very

successful attempt to grapple with a writer of such singular power. "Observations on the Punishment of the Pillory," and "An Appeal against the Act for regulating Royal Marriages," took the side of humanity against barbarous custom and mistaken notions of national policy.

An "Attempt to Estimate the Poetical Talent of the Present Age," written in 1815, is chiefly remarkable as testifying his high appreciation of the poetry of Wordsworth, (at a period when such a testimony was sufficient to ensure almost universal ridicule,) and scarcely less so for the courage with which it denounced the gloomy exaggerations of Lord Byron, who was then in the full blaze of his popularity. Hazlitt's "Spirit of the Age," was not published till ten years afterwards. Mr. Talfourd was probably the very first who publicly declared, on critical grounds, that William Wordsworth was a true poet. In this declaration, as in several others in this "Estimate," he displayed the very uncommon critical faculty of *discovering the truth by its own light*, and the almost as uncommon courage and generosity of telling the world—without equivocation or escape-valves—what he had found.

In 1817, Talfourd started as a Special Pleader. During his period of study he had assisted Mr. Chitty in his voluminous work on the Criminal Laws. The chief quarters in which he carried on his literary

labours, were now in the "Retrospective Review" and the "Encyclopædia Metropolitana." The articles on "Homer," on "Greek Tragedians," and "Greek Lyric Poets," in the latter, were written by him. He began his connection with the "New Monthly" in 1820, and continued to furnish the dramatic criticisms, besides other papers, in that magazine for twelve years. He subsequently wrote in the "Edinburgh Review" and "London Magazine," and published in 1826 a Memoir of Mrs. Radcliffe, prefixed to her posthumous work of "Gaston de Blondeville." About the same time he brought out an edition of "Dickenson's Guide to the Quarter Sessions," a labour for which the puzzled brains of country squires best know how to feel grateful to him.

Mr. Talfourd was called to the bar by the Society of the Middle Temple in 1821, and joined the Oxford Circuit and Berkshire Sessions. In 1822 he married Rachel, daughter of John Towell Rutt, Esq., a name well known to political reformers.

The gradual extension of his professional engagements through the circuit, induced him to retire from the sessions at the expiration of twelve years, when he was called to the degree of Serjeant—the very same year in which he wrote his tragedy of "Ion." He now confines his practice almost exclusively to the circuit of the Common Pleas. Any exception has been on occasions when his

sympathies excited him to exertion. He undertook the defence of the "True Sun" newspaper in the King's Bench, and electrified the court by his eloquence on that occasion. His defence of "Tait's Magazine" against Richmond, in the Exchequer, was equally brilliant and sound of argument.

In 1834, the electors of Reading returned their distinguished townsman to Parliament by a large majority, composed of all parties. He was returned again in the General Election of 1839, but declined standing in that of 1841. His parliamentary career has been distinguished by the same high talent, consistency of principle, and moral purpose, which have pervaded his life. His most celebrated speeches are those on moving for the Law of Copyright, and on bringing forward his "Custody of Infants" Bill. The tone and style of the former speech, were like its subject, new to the ear of the House; but he was listened to with deep attention, while with earnest and fluent language, assisted by happy illustrative reference, he enforced the claims of the struggling professors of literature upon that property in the products of the brain, which the law allowed to be wrested from them. With regard to the Custody of Infants, his attempt to obtain an alteration of the statute, which in every case of separation, though the character of the wife was as free from spot or taint as that of the husband was

sullied by vice, yet relentlessly tore the children from their mother, and gave them as his sole right to the father—was advocated with indefatigable zeal, and finally with partial success.

Mr. Serjeant Talfourd was an assiduous discharger of his parliamentary duties, when not engaged on the circuit; notwithstanding which, he always found time for literature. The two tragedies which succeeded "Ion," were written while he was in Parliament. He also at that period published an edition of the "Letters of Lamb," with a touching and masterly sketch of the life of his old friend; a delightful book to all true lovers of literature.

While the leisure hours of Mr. Talfourd have been enriched with the society of the most distinguished literary characters of the time, for among his friends have been—the living would be too numerous to mention—Godwin, Hazlitt, Coleridge, Lamb, &c., he never forgot his old master, Dr. Valpy. Among other instances of friendly intercourse, which continued to the close of Dr. Valpy's life, he regularly attended all the meetings of the school, and always wrote the epilogues to the Greek Plays triennially performed.

Mr. Talfourd is remarkable for having achieved an equally high reputation in law and in letters; and it is almost as peculiar a circumstance that he has had so few dissentient voices among the critics of

his day. Dissentient voices of course he has had to endure, as all eminent men must have in their lifetime, and more or less afterwards; but if, the worthy Serjeant has occasionally suffered, he has not had more than "his share," while the majority have cordially admitted his claims with such slight objections or differences of opinion with him, and with each other, as are natural to different minds in contemplating the same objects. The spirit of fairness asks and permits this amicable discussion on all hands, and with this feeling the following critical remarks are submitted.

If the public, with its leaders and teachers and censors of the present day, are cold and indifferent with regard to dramatic literature, or positively hostile when a drama is published without having been produced on the stage—it is probable that matters were still worse in this respect when Mr. Talfourd commenced his dramatic career. To complete, therefore, the peculiarity of his position, he wrung from the public and the influencers of its opinions—opinions which seemed to assume some credit to themselves for their undramatic tendencies — a triumph, and on the very stage, for a legitimate drama; and while the age had been returning, in the more prominent of its late poetry, to the Shaksperean and Elizabethan standards, he stood in the doorway of the Gallic-Greek-English

school, and took the town by surprise with a new "Cato" of a stronger colouring and calibre. We say advisedly the Gallic-Greek-English school,—meaning the Gallic conception of the Greek drama, which is indeed a thing as unlike the reality, as Versailles is to the Parthenon; and which Dryden helped to naturalize in England, when he "reformed" our versification generally, upon the Gallic conception of rhythm. Of this school (not that we for a moment would hint at any actual similarity) were Addison's "Cato," Johnson's "Irene," and Home's "Douglas:" and of this, in our later age, arose "Ion," which is well worth all the three, taking them on their own ground; more exalted than "Cato," more eloquent than "Irene," and more purely tender than "Douglas;" with a glow from end to end, which may be called the *sentiment* of unity, and which nobly distinguishes it from all. Let the same question of origin be put to Mr. Talfourd's "Ion" as to the "Ion" of Euripides,—

Καί τις γάλακτι σ' ἐξέθρεψε Δελφιδῶν;

and it must be answered, we believe, even so.

Of the concentration and passion of the Shaksperian drama, Mr. Talfourd's first dramatic production does not, as we have assumed, partake. The appeal of his tragedy is to the *conscientiousness* of its audience; and it purifies less by pity and terror, than by admiration and exaltation. Its power is less an in-

tellectual and poetical than a moral power; and the peculiarity of its sublime lies significantly in the excellence of its virtue. For,—avoiding any loose classification of this tragedy with the works of the Greek dramatists, on the specious ground of its containing that awful dogma of fatalism which is the thunder of the Æschylean drama;—the critic will recognize upon consideration, that while the design of "Ion" turns upon a remorseless fatalism, the principal action turns upon Virtue completing herself within the narrow bounds left by Destiny to Life. It is not only a drama of fate, but of self-devoted duty. The necessity of woe is not stronger in it, than the necessity of heroism. The determination of the heroic free-will confronts in it gloriously the predestination of circumstance. And, strikingly and contrastingly effective, there arises beside the *vis inertiæ* of the colossal Fate, and the *vis certaminis* of the high-hearted victim, the tender elevated purity of the woman Clemanthe; equal in augustness to either power, and crushed disconsolately between both.

This mixture of the pure Christian principle of faith and love with the Greek principle of inexorable fate, produces an incongruity in the tragedy which raises a conflict in the mind. Capricious demons are left triumphant, and noble humanity is sacrificed. The very same effect is equally produced by the method and style of the execution. In the Greek

mode of treating these subjects the sublime rather than the beautiful is aimed at; the sterner and colder characters of the actors, and the powerful effect of the chorus, nerve the mind to bear the contemplation of humanity in the iron grasp of Fate. Above all, sympathy is not allowed to rest satisfied with the triumph of the remorseless gods, for the old Greek tragedians were most of them sceptical at heart. The choruses, besides their alarms, would have "had their doubts."

The tragedy of "Ion" has an admirable unity of purpose and expression; a unity apart from the 'unities,' and exceeding them in critical value; and in itself an essential characteristic of every high work of art. The conception springs clear from the author's mind, and alights with fulness upon the reader's; the interest is uninterrupted throughout, and the final impression distinct. To the language, may be attributed appropriateness and eloquence, with some occasional redundance, and a certain deficiency in strength: the images are rather elegant than bold or original; and the versification flows gracefully and copiously within the limits of the school. The effect of the whole is such as would be created were it possible to restore the ground-plan of an Athenian temple in its majestic and simple proportions, and decorate it with the elegant statues of Canova.

Mr. Talfourd's second work of "The Athenian

Captive," has much of the ruling principle, and most of the features of his former tragedy, though with sufficient variety in its structure and adornments. If he appears somewhat haunted by the ideal virtue of his "Ion," it is not an ignoble bewitchment; nor could any right priestly hand extend itself very eagerly to exorcise a "man of Lawe" of the nineteenth century, from the presence of such high chivalrous shadows. It was produced under Mr. Macready's auspices, who personated the chief character very finely. The effect of the tragedy was very good in itself; very well received by a crowded audience; promised to become a refining influence upon the stage—a stage so much needing such assistance—was played three or four times, and has never been acted since. The mysteries, like the stupidities, of Management, are inscrutable.

The tragedy of "Glencoe,"—or "The Fate of the Macdonalds," again displayed the learned author's tendency to revert to the old classical tyranny of fate. But still greater varieties were introduced in the present instance than in the production last named. And not merely in the scenery and costume; nor in the wish to write for a favourite actor—though the "Advertisement to the Second Edition" would lead us fully to expect this.

"It was composed in the last vacation at Glandwr, in the most beautiful part of North Wales, *chiefly* for the purpose of embodying

the feelings which the grandest *scenery* in the Highlands of Scotland had awakened, when I visited them in the preceding autumn. I had no distinct intention at that time of seeking for it a trial on the stage; but having almost unconsciously blended with the image of the hero, *the figure*, the *attitudes*, and *the tones* of the great actor whom I had associated for many years with every form of tragedy, I could not altogether repress the hope that I might one day enjoy the delight, &c. &c. The Play was printed, merely for the purpose of being presented to my friends; but when only two or three copies had been presented, I was *encouraged to believe* that it would one day be acted," &c. &c.

Passing over such objections as might be made to a "tragedy" being written chiefly for the purpose of describing the emotions induced by any local scenery —what a development is contained, in the last two sentences, of the condition of dramatic affairs in this country!—of the all-powerful position of a manager or principal actor, and of the humiliating position of the dramatic poet. Here we see one of the most able and eminent men of the time humbly relating how he was "encouraged to believe that his play would one day be acted!" Instead of Mr. Talfourd being in a position to command the representation of any production, it turns out that he is exactly in the position of all other dramatists—acted or unacted. Yet people wonder at the poverty of the modern acted drama, and at the dearth of any new pieces of the higher class. If Mr. Talfourd, with his third tragedy, felt himself surrounded and oppressed with

all these doubts and difficulties, what wonder that nearly all other dramatists should have had no chance. The accusations of partiality or favoritism in the selection of the productions of particular men—except in the single instance of Sir Edward Bulwer—are comparatively unfounded. The expenses now thought necessary to incur in the production of a new five-act piece upon the stage, are so heavy, that very few new pieces *can* be produced in a season; so that the general system is a tolerably impartial and sweeping rejection, for which it is foolishly thought requisite by managements to offer some other reasons, critical or prevaricating.

But in this tragedy of "Glencoe," there is not only the charm of descriptive poetry, there is also the poetry of feeling, and of deep unaffected sentiment. It has nothing in common with that mawkish sentimentality and affectation of something profound, either in thought or feeling, which are discoverable in too many productions of our day. In "Glencoe" there is developed clearly, and truly, that anguish which overcomes a noble mind, when its affections, having been drawn out under the half-guilty, half-innocent guise of female friendship, till the devotion became entire and absorbing the whole being—are put aside and evaded by the fair friend on the score of nothing more than friendship having been understood. An anguish in which the future life of

the lover has become a drifting wreck; and that of the thoughtless deceiver generally a sacrifice to some ungenial and selfish alliance. The tragedy ends rather poorly in comparison with the expectations raised by the emotions previously excited; but that one striking phase in the history of human hearts, is, however, embodied in "Glencoe," and with a force, which the delicacy and refinement of the language sometimes renders less apparent to the ear than to the sensibility, but which is derived from its inherent truth, and artistical development.

It may be said of Mr. Talfourd, as a general estimate of his character, abilities, and aim in life, that his whole career has been equally distinguished by high moral purpose, and by the most unquestionable talents. It does not fall within the scope of this work to enter into any examination of Mr. Talfourd's legal abilities; we must, therefore, content ourselves with observing, that the marked anxiety of professional men to obtain his services can only be the result of an experience of the most advantageous results.

RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES

AND

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

"Oh, sir! pray is this gold?—and this?—and this?

* * * * * * *

Doth it sound?—

Melodiously—a golden tune."

SHIRLEY'S *Arcadia*.

R. M. MILNES, AND H. COLERIDGE.

THE poetry of Richard Monckton Milnes has met with considerable praise in many quarters, yet hardly as much as it deserves; and it has met with peculiar dispraise, more than it deserves, either in kind or degree. A common case enough. Of the poetry of Hartley Coleridge,—as of Charles Tennyson, and Thomas Wade,—we may say without fear of contradiction, that, like many other good things, it is not at all known to the public.

Mr. Milnes has been accused of a want of the divine fire of imagination and passion; and he has, moreover, been accused of merely thinking that he thinks,—or of imitating the tone and current of other men's minds, and mistaking that for the original impulse and production of his own. Not any of these broad accusations are justifiable, and in some respects they are demonstrably unfounded.

Mr. Milnes does not appear to possess the least

dramatic passion, nor does he display much impulse or energy in his poetry. There is no momentum in the progress of his lines; and the want is conspicuously betrayed in his blank verse, because, of all other forms, that is the one which absolutely requires the most genuine, thought-sustained, and unflagging energies. We are almost tempted to hazard the opinion that fine blank verse requires great material stamina; in fact, a powerful internal physique, to carry on the burthen and purpose of the soul. We think that the psychological history of nearly every one of our great poets who wrote in blank verse, will bear us out in the opinion. Several exceptions are undoubtedly against this; and the greatest of them would be Keats; yet here the exception would tend to prove the rule, as he died soon after the production of his only poem in blank verse, which is, moreover, unfinished. How far this latter speculation—which indeed may be of no sound value—would be applicable or inapplicable to the poet at present under discussion, need not be considered, because he seldom writes in blank verse; he is essentially a lyrical poet; but to his occasionally attempting the former may be attributed some of the accusations of want of passion and impulsive energies.

But the most ostensible is not always the most forcible; there is latent fire as well as palpable combustion; and the effect of genuine elements, though

always proportionate to its cause, must seem inadequate, in all cases of very refined or quiet development, except to those who are prepared with a ready sympathy, and can recognize the deepest source from the least murmuring that rises up to the surface. A poet should be judged by the class to which he belongs, and by the degree of success he attains in his own favorite aim. Mr. Milnes, regarding poetry as "the gods' most choicest dower," says of it, in his "Leucas,"—

> "Poesy, which in chaste repose abides,
> As in its atmosphere; that placid flower
> Thou hast exposed to passion's fiery tides," &c.

Here, at once, we discover Mr. Milnes' theory, and the chief aim of his muse. Sappho is blamed for steeping her verse in "passion's fiery tides," because poesy is said to abide "in chaste repose," as its proper atmosphere. By this standard then, is the poetry of Richard Monckton Milnes to be measured; it is a standard of inherent beauty; and he will be found to attain it most completely. A short extract from one of the earliest poems in his collection published ten years ago, will suffice to illustrate this.

> "But when in clearer unison
> That marvellous concord still went on;
> And *gently as a blossom grows*
> A frame of syllables uprose;
> With a delight akin to fear
> My heart beat fast and strong, to hear

Two murmurs beautifully blent
As of a voice and instrument,
A hand laid lightly on low chords
A voice that sobbed between its words.
"Stranger! the voice that trembles in your ear
You would have placed had you been fancy-free
First in the chorus of the happy sphere
The home of deified mortality.
* * * *
Stranger, the voice is Sappho's,—weep; oh! weep,
That the soft tears of sympathy may fall
Into this prison of the sunless deep,
Where I am laid in miserable thrall."*

Leucas.

It is as a lyric and elegiac poet (in the ancient sense of elegy) with a temperament rather elegiac than lyric, that Mr. Monckton Milnes takes his place among the distinguished writers of his age and country. Notwithstanding that he has written "Poetry for the People," neither in the work in question nor in any other, has he given evidence of a genius calculated for popular appeals. He might have called his work "Poetry for the Philosophers;" but the very philosophers should be of the upper House and accustomed to tread softly upon Plato's carpets, or they would be found inevitably defective, now and then, in their range of sympathies. In style, he is clear and concise, almost familiar, and in his blank verse he too often indulges in a commonplace colloquialism; but the impulses of mind and

* Memorials of a Tour in Greece, by R. M. Milnes. 1834.

heart, although abundantly human and true, are surrounded by so definite a circle of intellectual habit, that they cannot or, at least, do not cast themselves beyond it; and it gives a fine and recondite colour to his simplest forms of expression.

The poetical productions of Hartley Coleridge are also exclusively lyrical and elegiac. He is one of the many instances of the disadvantage of having an eminent father. It was almost impossible for the son of such a man not to be influenced by his father's genius to a degree that is destructive of originality. With strong feeling, a bright fancy, and a facility of versification, there is yet a certain hard resemblance in the poems of the son to the poems of the father, which may perhaps be termed an unconscious mechanism of the faculties, acting under the associations of love. His designs want invention, and his rhapsodies abandonment. His wildness does not look quite spontaneous, but as if it blindly followed something erratic. The mirth seems rather forced; but the love and the melancholy are his own. Hartley Coleridge has a sterling vein of thought in him, without a habit and order of thought. It is extremely probable that he keeps his best things to himself. His father talked his best thoughts, so that somebody had the benefit of them; his son for the most part keeps his for his own bosom.

We are averse to notice a man's politics in speak-

ing of his poetry, but Mr. Hartley Coleridge forces his spleen disagreeably upon the attention, especially in his "Leonard and Susan."

But if the lovers of poetry have done wrong to suffer the verses of Hartley Coleridge to sink into the mass of forgotten publications, it is a far stronger ground of complaint that the poems of Thomas Wade —author of "Mundi et Cordis Carmina," "Helena," and "Prothanasia," &c., should not have fared very much better in respect of popularity. The first of these works contains many echoes of other poets, the consequence of studies in a "loving spirit," but the echoes are true to their origin, and in the finest spirit. In most cases, the thoughts and images are his own, derived from his own imagination, and from the depths of his being. This is more especially the case with "Prothanasia," which is founded upon a passage in the correspondence of Bettine Brentano with Goethe, and is well worthy of its foundation. A few lines of invocation will display the fervid tone of this poem :—

"Beautiful River! could I flow like thee,
Year after year, thro' this deliciousness
Ever-renewing; and retain no more
Of human thought and passion than might yield
A loving consciousness of grace and joy;
I could content me to endure, till Time
Had heap'd such million'd years upon his record,
As almost in himself to seem and be

The sole Eternity!—O, trees and flowers;
Joy-throated birds; and ye, soft airs and hues,
That nestle in yon skiey radiance!
Happy ye are, as beauteous: to your life,
Unrealised, unrealisable,
Intolerable, infinite desire
Approacheth never; and ye live and die,
Your natures all-fulfilling and fulfill'd,
Self-satiate and perfected."

It is impossible to believe that such a poem should not some day find its just appreciation in the public mind. And it is the least of the merits of this author's productions that they display a care and classical finish from which many well-known writers might derive a very salutary lesson.

The following is one of Mr. Wade's sonnets, the prophetic spirit of which is its own sufficient comment. It is entitled "A Prophecy."

"There is a mighty dawning on the earth,
Of human glory: dreams unknown before
Fill the mind's boundless world, and wondrous birth
Is given to great thought: the deep-drawn lore,
But late a hidden fount, at which a few
Quaff'd and were glad, is now a flowing river,
Which the parch'd nations may approach and view,
Kneel down and drink, or float in it for ever:
The bonds of Spirit are asunder broken,
And Matter makes a very sport of distance;
On every side appears a silent token
Of what will be hereafter, when Existence
Shall even become a pure and equal thing,
And earth sweep high as heaven, on solemn wing."

And this, also by the same author, is a striking proof of intellectual subtlety:—

"God will'd Creation; but Creation was not
The cause of that Almighty Will of God,
But that great God's desire of emanation:
Beauty of Human Love the object is;
But Love's sweet cause lives in the Soul's desire
For intellectual, sensual sympathies:
Seeing a plain-plumed bird, in whose deep throat
We know the richest power of music dwells,
We long to hear its linked melodies:
Scenting a far-off flower's most sweet perfume,
That gives its balm of life to every wind,
We crave to mark the beauty of its bloom:
But bird nor flower is that Volition's cause;
But Music and fine Grace, graven on the Soul, like laws."

It may be said that there is such a thing as an author's voluntary abandonment of the field; and that this is peculiarly the case with regard to Hartley Coleridge, and to Charles Tennyson. Perhaps so; still it is not a poet's business to be his own bellman. Be this as it may, there is something peculiarly touching in the withdrawal of Charles Tennyson from the pathway to the temple of Poesy, as though he would prefer to see his brother's name enshrined with an undivided fame. One little volume of sweet and unpretending poetry comprises all we know of him. It has long been out of print. His feeling of the "use and service" of poetry in the world may be

comprised in a few lines, which may also be regarded as the best comment upon his own ;—

> We must have music while we languish here,
> To make the Soul with pleasant fancies rife
> And soothe the stranger from another sphere.
>
> *Sonnet* xv.

But perhaps we had better give one of Charles Tennyson's sonnets entire:—

> "I trust thee from my soul, O Mary dear,
> But, ofttimes when delight has fullest power,
> Hope treads too lightly for herself to hear,
> And doubt is ever by until the hour:
> I trust thee, Mary, but till thou art mine
> Up from thy foot unto thy golden hair,
> O let me still misgive thee and repine,
> Uncommon doubts spring up with blessings rare!
> Thine eyes of purest love give surest sign,
> Drooping with fondness, and thy blushes tell
> A flitting tale of steadiest faith and zeal;
> Yet I will doubt—to make success divine!
> A tide of summer dreams with gentlest swell
> Will bear upon me then, and I shall love most well!"
>
> *Sonnet* xxiii.

Mr. Milnes's earlier poems are more individual in expression and ideal in their general tone, and probably contain more essential poetry and more varied evidence of their author's gifts, than the writings which it has since pleased him to vouchsafe to the public. He has since divested himself of the peculiarities which offended some critics, and has

more studiously incarnated himself to the perception of readers not poetical. The general character of his genius is gentle and musing. The shadow of an academical tree, if not of a temple-column, seems to lie across his brows, which are bland and cheerful none the less. He has too much real sensibility, too much active sympathy with the perpetual workings of nature and humanity, to have any morbid, moaning sentimentality. Beauty he sees always; but moral and spiritual beauty, the light kernelled in the light, he sees supremely. Never will you hear him ask, with a great contemporary poet, if there is "any moral, shut within the bosom of a rose?"—because while he would eschew with that contemporary the vulgar utilitarianism of moral drawing, he would perceive as distinctly as the rose itself, and perhaps more distinctly, the spiritual significance of its beauty. His philosophy looks upward as well as looks round—looks upward because it looks round: it is essentially and specifically Christian. His poetry is even ecclesiastical sometimes; and the author of "One Tract More," and his tendency towards a decorative religion, are to be recognized in the haste with which he lights a taper before a picture, or bends beneath a "Papal Benediction." For the rest, he is a very astringent Protestant in his love for ratiocination—and he occasionally draws out his reasons into a fine line of metaphysics. He sits

among the muses, making reasons; and when Apollo plucks him by the ear to incite him to some more purely poetic work,—then he sings them. With every susceptibility of sense and fancy, and full of appreciations of art, he would often write pictorially if he did not nearly always write analytically: Moreover, he makes sentiments as well as reasons; and whatever may be the nobility of sentiment or thought the words are sure to be worthy of it. He has used metres in nearly every kind of combination, and with results almost uniformly, if not often exquisitely, harmonious and expressive. There may be a slight want of suppleness and softness in his lighter rhythms, and his blank verse appears to us defective in intonation and variety, besides such deficiencies as we have previously suggested; but the intermediate forms of composition abundantly satisfy the ear. With all this, he is quite undramatic; and, in matters of character and story, has scarcely ever gone the length, and that never very successfully, even of the ordinary ballad writer. His poems, for the most part, are what is called "occasional,"—their motive—impulse arising from without. He perceives and responds, rather than creates. Yet he must have the woof of his own personality to weave upon. With the originality which every man possesses who has strength enough to be true to his individuality, his genius has rather the air of reflection than of inspiration; his

muse is a Pythia competent to wipe the foam from her lips—if there be any foam. Thoughtful and self-possessed instead of fervent and impulsive, he is tender instead of passionate. And when he rises above his ordinary level of philosophy and tenderness, it is into a still air of rapture instead of into exulting tumults and fervours. Even his love poems, for which he has been crowned by the critics with such poor myrtle as they could gather, present a serene transfiguring of life instead of any quickening of the currents of life: the poet's heart never beats so tumultuously as to suspend his observation of the beating of it.

The last publication of this poet is entitled "Palm-Leaves," and is a valuable gift to the public, not only for its poetical beauties, but for the enlarged toleration of its views and teachings. So that a religion be sincerely felt, whether Mahommedan, or of ancient Egypt, he regards even its fragmentary forms of truth with reverence;—

> —though a gleam,
> Not less a portion of the fires that steep
> Mankind's brute matter in the heavenly stream,
> And lead to waking life, through mazy modes of dream.
>
> *The Burden of Egypt.*

"Palm-Leaves" departs from the old conventionalisms of fiction as to the manners, customs, and religion of the East, and sets the truth before us in a light which

in this instance is far more delightful to contemplate. The poems will not be found the less poetical, in the hands of Mr. Milnes, on this account. The "Hareem" is as beautiful as it is new in poetry and true in sentiment. The "Mosque" and "Mahommedanism" are deeply interesting; and the Arabian legend entitled "Mahommed and the Assassin" is simple, brief and sublime, uplifting the heart and soul with magnanimity and devotion. Nor is the book wanting in abundance of graceful thoughts and pleasing fancies, albeit their general tenor is grave and subdued.

The general estimate of Richard Monckton Milnes is a thinking feeling man, worshipping and loving as a man should—gifted naturally, and refined socially; and singing the songs of his own soul and heart, in a clear sweet serenity which does not want depth, none the less faithfully and nobly, that he looks occasionally from the harp-strings to the music-book. His "Lay of the Humble," "Long Ago," and other names of melodies, strike upon the memory as softly and deeply as a note of the melodies themselves — while (apart from these lyrics) he has written some of the fullest and finest sonnets, not merely of our age, but of our literature.

The three other poets mentioned in this paper have each written very fine sonnets. Those of Charles Tennyson are extremely simple and unaffected; the spontaneous offspring of the feelings

and the fancy:—those of Thomas Wade are chiefly of the intellect; high-wrought, recondite, refined, classical, and often of sterling thought, with an upward and onward eye:—those of Hartley Coleridge are reflective; the emanations of a sad heart, aimless, of little hope, and resigned,—seeming to proceed from one who has suffered the best of his life to slip away from him unused. Sonnet IX. pathetically expresses this.

"Long time a child, and still a child, when years
Had painted manhood on my cheek, was I;
For yet I lived like one not born to die,
A thriftless prodigal of smiles and tears,
No hope I needed, and I knew no fears.
But sleep, though sweet, is only sleep,—and waking,
I waked to sleep no more, at once o'ertaking
The vanguard of my age, with all arrears
Of duty on my back. Nor child, nor man,
Nor youth, nor sage, I find my head is grey,
For I have lost the race I never ran,
A rathe December blights my lagging May;
And still I am a child, tho' I be old,
Time is my debtor for my years untold."

The prose writings of Hartley Coleridge,—particularly his "Yorkshire Worthies," (republished with additions, under the title of "Biographia Borealis,") and his Introduction to "Massinger and Ford,"—are all of first-rate excellence. It is much to be regretted they are not more numerous.

REV. S. SMITH,—A. FONBLANQUE,

AND

DOUGLAS JERROLD.

"Hard words that have been
So nimble, and so full of subtle flame,
As if that every one from whom they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest."

BEAUMONT.

"His fine wit
Makes such a wound, the knife is lost in it."

SHELLEY.

"I shall talk nothing but crackers and fire-works to-night."

BEN JONSON.

"Hold out, ye guiltie and ye galled hides,
And meet my far-fetched stripes with waiting sides."

HALL'S SATIRES.

REV. S. SMITH,—A. FONBLANQUE,

AND

DOUGLAS JERROLD.

THE present age is destined for the first time in the history of literature and of the human mind, to display Wit systematically and habitually employed by the great majority of its possessors in the endeavour to promote the public good. While great satirists like Juvenal and Horace have been "on virtue's side," they shone all the more for being exceptions to the fraternity. Not only the vices, the follies, the vanities, the weaknesses of our fellow-creatures, have furnished the best subjects for the shafts of wit; but little self-denial was practised with reference to the nobler feelings and actions of humanity. To take a flight directly to modern times, let us alight at once upon the days of Charles the Second, when the laugh was raised indiscriminately at vice or

virtue, honesty or knavery, wisdom or folly. Whatever faults such great writers as Swift and Butler, or Moliere and Voltaire, may sometimes have committed in directing their ridicule amiss, their intentions, at least, were reformatory, and therefore their errors are not to be compared with the licentious poison which spurted glistening from the pens of Wycherly, Farquhar, Congreve, and Vanbrugh, who had no noble aim or object, or good intention, whether sound or self-deluding—but whose vicious instinct almost invariably prompted them to render heartless vice and wanton dishonesty as attractive and successful as possible, and make every sincere and valuable quality seem dull or ridiculous. All the great writers of Fables—writers who are among the best instructors, and noblest benefactors of their species—have been humorists rather than wits, and do not properly come into the question.

Up to the present period, the marked distinction between humour and wit has been that the former evinced a pleasurable sympathy; the latter, a cutting derision. Humour laughed with humanity; wit *at* all things. But now, for the first time, as a habit and a principle, do all the established wits, and the best rising wits, walk arm-in-arm in the common recognition of a moral aim. The very banding together of a number of genuine and joyous wits in the "London Charivari," instead of all being at "daggers

drawn" with each other in the old way, is in itself a perfectly novel event in the history of letters; and when this fact is taken in conjunction with the unquestionable good feeling and service in the cause of justice and benevolence displayed by its writers, the permanent existence and extensive success of such a periodical is one of the most striking and encouraging features of the age.

The strongest instances of the commencement of this change are to be found in the writings of Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, and Leigh Hunt. No man has left such a number of axiomatic sayings, at once brilliant and true, as Hazlitt. That they are mixed up with many things equally brilliant, and only half-true, or perhaps not true at all, is not the question: he always meant them for honest truths, and invariably had a definite moral purpose in view. Perhaps in the works of Charles Lamb, and the prose writings of Leigh Hunt, wit and humour may be said to unite, and for the production of a moral effect. An anxiety to advance the truth and promote the happiness, the right feeling, the knowledge, and the welfare of mankind, is conspicuous in all the principal essays of these three authors. That the same thing should ever come to be said of wits in general, shows that the good feeling of mankind has at length enlisted on its side those brilliant "shots" who had previously refused all union or co-operation, and who,

having been equally unsparing of friend or foe, rendered every noble action liable to be made ridiculous, and therefore, to a certain extent, impeded both private and public improvement and elevation of character. It should here be observed that the office of the poetical Satirist appears to have died out, not because there are no such men (as the world always says when no "such" man appears), but because there is no demand for him.

The three writers, each of whose names possesses a peculiar lustre of its own, have a lively sense of the humorous, but are not in themselves great as humorists. Mr. Jerrold is the only one of the three who exercises any of the latter faculty in a consecutive and characterizing form, and even with him it is apt to ramble widely, and continually emerges in caustic or sparkling dialogue and repartee, which are his forte.

The Reverend Sydney Smith gives a laconic account of the commencement of his own career in the Preface to his published works, and as his own words usually "defy competition," the best plan will be to let him speak for himself.

"When first I went into the Church," says he, "I had a curacy in the middle of Salisbury Plain. The Squire of the parish took a fancy to me, and requested me to go with his son to reside at the University of Weimar; before we could get there, Germany became the seat of war, and in stress of politics we put into Edinburgh, where I remained five years. The principles of the French Revolution were

then fully afloat, and it is impossible to conceive a more violent and agitated state of society. Among the first persons with whom I became acquainted were, Lord Jeffrey, Lord Murray (late Lord Advocate for Scotland,) and Lord Brougham; all of them maintaining opinions upon political subjects a little too liberal for the dynasty of Dundas, then exercising a supreme power over the northern division of the island.

"One day we happened to meet in the eighth or ninth story or flat in Buccleugh-place, the elevated residence of the then Mr. Jeffrey. I proposed that we should set up a Review; this was acceded to with acclamation. I was appointed Editor, and remained long enough in Edinburgh to edit the first number of the Edinburgh Review. The motto I proposed for the Review was,

'*Tenui musam meditamur avena.*'

'We cultivate literature upon a little oatmeal.'

But this was too near the truth to be admitted, and so we took our present grave motto from *Publius Syrus*, of whom none of us had, I am sure, ever read a single line; and so began what has since turned out to be a very important and able journal. When I left Edinburgh, it fell into the stronger hands of Lord Jeffrey and Lord Brougham, and reached the highest point of popularity and success."

After giving various good reasons for a high appreciation of the "Edinburgh Review" at the time it started, Sydney Smith says—

"I see very little in my Reviews to alter or repent of: I always endeavoured to fight against evil; and what I thought evil then, I think evil now. I am heartily glad that all our disqualifying laws for religious opinions are abolished, and I see nothing in such measures but unmixed good and real increase of strength to our Establishment."

The few words with which he introduces the cele-

brated "Letters of Peter Plymley" (which were so very instrumental in assisting the Catholic emancipation by extreme ridicule of all needless alarms upon the occasion) are inimitable;—

"Somehow or another, it came to be conjectured that I was the author: *I have always denied it; but finding that I deny it in vain, I have thought it might be as well to include the Letters in this Collection*: they had an immense circulation at the time, and I think above 20,000 copies were sold."

As displaying the political and social opinions of Sydney Smith, the following may suffice:—

"It is always considered as a piece of impertinence in England, if a man of less than two or three thousand a year has any opinions at all upon important subjects; and in addition he was sure at that time to be assailed with all the Billingsgate of the French Revolution—Jacobin, Leveller, Atheist, Deist, Socinian, Incendiary, Regicide, were the gentlest appellations used; and the man who breathed a syllable against the senseless bigotry of the two Georges, or hinted at the abominable tyranny and persecution exercised upon Catholic Ireland, was shunned as unfit for the relations of social life. Not a murmur against any abuse was permitted; to say a word against the suitor-cide delays of the Court of Chancery, or the cruel punishments of the Game Laws, or against any abuse which a rich man inflicted or a poor man suffered, was treason against the *Plousiocracy*, and was bitterly and steadily resented."

"We believe," says the 'Times,' in a notice of the works of Sydney Smith, "that the concession of full defence to prisoners by counsel, is a boon for which humanity is in great measure indebted to the effect produced upon the public mind by his vigorous

article in the 'Edinburgh Review,' for December, 1828." Previous to this a man might be hanged before he had been half heard.

Something remains to be added to this: Sydney Smith is opposed to the Ballot, and the Penny Postage, and is in favour of capital punishment—apparently preferring retribution to reformation. His feelings are always generous and sincere, whatever may be thought of his judgment in certain things, and his Sermons are replete with pure doctrine, toleration, and liberality of sentiment. The Irish Catholics ought to erect a monument to him, with his statue on the top—looking very grave, but with the hands "holding both his sides," and the tablets at the base covered with bas-relief selected from the graphic pages of Peter Plymley.

Although wit is the great predominating characteristic of the writings of Sydney Smith, the finest and most original humour is not unfrequently displayed. Under this latter head may be classed his review in the "Edinburgh" of Dr. Langford's "Anniversary Sermon of the Royal Humane Society." The review is so laconic that we give it entire.

"An accident, which happened to the gentleman engaged in reviewing this Sermon, proves, in the most striking manner, the importance of this charity for restoring to life persons in whom the vital power is suspended. He was discovered with Dr. Langford's discourse lying open before him in a state of the most profound sleep; from which he could not, by any means, be awakened for a great length

of time. By attending, however, to the rules prescribed by the Humane Society, flinging in the smoke of tobacco, applying hot flannels, *and carefully removing the discourse itself to a great distance*, the critic was restored to his disconsolate brothers.

"The only account he could give of himself was, that he remembers reading on, regularly, till he came to the following pathetic description of a drowned tradesman; beyond which he recollects nothing."*

This is the whole of the review, for the quotation follows, so tumid, and drawling, and affected, and common-place, that we forbear to give it, lest the same accident recorded by the critic should occur to the present reader. The "Letters to Archdeacon Singleton" are excellent; and display both wit and humour as well as reason. One of the happiest "turns" among many, is that which he gives to the threat that if clergymen agitate any questions affecting the patronage of the bishops, the democratic Philistines will come down upon the inferior clergy and sweep them all away together. "Be it so," says Sydney Smith; "I am quite ready to be swept away when the time comes. Everybody has his favourite death; some delight in apoplexy, and others prefer miasmus. I would infinitely rather be crushed by democrats, than, under the plea of the public good, be mildly and blandly absorbed by bishops."† The illustrative anecdote which follows this, is inimitable, but we cannot afford space for it.

* Works of the Rev. Sydney Smith. Second edition, vol. i. p. 25.

† First Letter to Archdeacon Singleton. Works, vol. iii. p. 195.

Albany Fonblanque was intended for the bar, and became a student of the Middle Temple. He was a pupil of Chitty, the special pleader, and from his acuteness and promptitude in seizing upon certain prominent features of a case, great expectations were no doubt entertained of the brightness of his future career in the law. But meantime he had made the discovery that he could write on current topics of interest, and his fellow-students also discovered that what he wrote was a keen hit—"a palpable hit." He soon proceeded to politics. Castlereagh's "Six Acts" made a political writer of him. Totally neglecting the "declarations" and "pleas" himself, and the cause of neglect if not also of "wit" in others, Albany Fonblanque incited the students in Mr. Chitty's office to the discussion of the questions of the day, greatly to the delight and satisfaction of all parties, till a brother pupil occasionally exclaiming in his gleeful edification, "What a pity it is that some one does not say that *in print!*" the idea of actually trying it, occurred to the mind of Fonblanque. He wrote "an article,"—it produced an immediate "sensation,"—and discovering at the same moment, how very much he disliked the law, and how very much he should prefer literature and sharp-shooting, he hurried away from Mr. Chitty's dusky office, and threw himself into the brightest current of the many-branching many-mouthed periodical press.

But the study of the law from which Fonblanque had so gladly emancipated his mind, had still been of great value to the subsequent management of his powers. It served to check the natural excesses of a vivid fancy, and to render him searching, acute, logical, and clear-headed amidst contradictory or confusing statements and reasonings. Those who have read any of Sydney Smith's lucubrations in favour of the punishment of death, should read Albany Fonblanque's articles, entitled "Capital Punishment;"* and "Justice and Mercy."† A brief extract will serve to show the tone adopted in the former, in which, let us observe, what a fine head and heart had Sir William Meredith, and do him honour who fifty years ago in the very "thick" of all the hanging, considered so right and necessary by everybody else, uplifted his voice against its vindictive inutility. Lord Brougham thinks—that is, in 1831, he thought—differently.

"'Even in crimes which are seldom or never pardoned,' observed Sir William Meredith, half a century ago, 'death is no prevention. Housebreakers, forgers, and coiners, are sure to be hanged; yet housebreaking, forgery, and coining, are the very crimes which are oftenest committed. Strange it is, that in the case of blood, of which we ought to be most tender, we should still go on against reason, and against experience, to make unavailing slaughter of our fellow-creatures.'

"'We foresee,' observes Fonblanque, 'that Lord Brougham and

* "England under Seven Administrations," vol. ii. p. 156.

† Ibid. Vol. i. p. 194.

Vaux will be a prodigious favourite with the Church. His observation 'that there was nothing in the Bible prohibitory of the punishment of death for other crimes than murder,' reminds us of the reason which the Newgate Ordinary, in Jonathan Wild, gives for his choice of punch, that it is a liquor nowhere spoken ill of in Scripture.

"The common phrase, the severity of punishment, is inaccurate, and misleading. Of our punishments no one quality can be predicated. They vary with humour and circumstance. Sometimes they are sanguinary, sometimes gentle; now it is called justice, anon, mercy. If intention were to be inferred from effect, it would be supposed that the policy of the law had been to improve crime by a sort of gymnastic exercise. When extraordinary activity is observed in any limb of crime, the law immediately corrects the partiality by a smart application of the rod; the ingenuity of the rogues then takes another direction which has hitherto had repose and indulgence, the law after a time pursues it in that quarter with a terrible chastisement; a third is then tried, and so on. By this process all the muscles of crime are in turn exercised, and the body felonious rendered supple, agile, and vigorous. There is as much fashion in what is termed justice as in bonnets or sleeves. The judge's cap is indeed as capricious as the ladies'. Sometimes the trimmings are blood-red, sometimes the sky-blue of mercy is in vogue. One assize there is a run of death on the horse-stealers; another, the sheep-stealers have their turn; last winter, arson was the capital rage; now, death for forgery is said to be coming in again—*ne quid nimis* is the maxim. By this system it has come to pass that our rogues are accomplished in all branches of felony, and practised in resources beyond the rogues of all other countries in the world; and our criminals may be affirmed to be worthy of our Legislators."*

Mr. Fonblanque's articles on the magistracy, and particularly the one in favour of stipendiary magistrates, in which he opposes Sydney Smith in

* Ibid. vol. ii. p. 158.

the "Edinburgh Review," (who chiefly objected to the abuses which would ensue among the "rural judges,") are also good specimens of his style. To see edge-tools playing *with each other*, adds a considerable zest to the argument.

"It is no objection to *town* Judges that they are in the pay of Government, yet it is an inseparable one to rural Judges. The Frenchman, according to Joe Miller, who observed that an Englishman recovered from a fever after eating a red-herring, administered one to the first of his fellow-countrymen whom he found labouring under that disease, and having found that it killed him, noted in his tablet that a red-herring cures an Englishman of a fever, but it kills a Frenchman. So, we must note, according to the 'Edinburgh Reviewer,' that pay is wholesome for Judges in town, but it is bad for Judges in the country. Pay in town is esteemed the very salt of place, the preservative of honesty which keeps the meat sweet and wholesome, and causes it to set the tooth of calumny and time at defiance. There is the * * * who holds out toughly, like a piece of old junk. What has made him such an everlasting officer? The salt, the pay. When we want to make a good and competent authority, what do we do with him? Souse him in salary; pickle him well with pay. The other day, how we improved the Judges, by giving them another dip in the public pan! But pay, though it *cures* great Judges, corrupts small ones. Our Reviewer says so, and we must believe it. A little pay, like a little learning, is a dangerous thing—drink deep, or touch not the Exchequer spring!"*

The "reply" of the Reverend Sydney Smith to the foregoing, would now be well worth reading, but we are not aware that any appeared.

Douglas Jerrold's father was the manager of a

*Ibid. vol. ii. p. 85.

country threatre. He did not, however, "take to the stage," owing perhaps to his inherent energies, which causing him to feel little interest in fanciful heroes, impelled him to seek his fortune amidst the actual storms and troubles of life. He went on board a man-of-war as a midshipman at eleven years of age. On board of this same vessel was Clarkson Stanfield, a midshipman also. The ship was paid off in two years' time from Jerrold's joining her; Stanfield and he parted, and never saw each other again till sixteen years afterwards, when they met on the stage of Drury Lane theatre. It was on the night that Jerrold's "Rent Day" was produced.

But to return to Jerrold's early days: his sea-life being at an end, he found himself, at the age of thirteen, with "all London" before him "where to choose"—not what he thought best, but what he could obtain. He learnt printing; and followed this during three or four years; he then began to write dramas for minor theatres. He met with more than what is usually considered success at the Surrey theatre, where he was the first who started, or rather revived, what is now known as the English "domestic drama." In speaking of it somewhere he says—"a poor thing, but mine own." It was certainly greatly in advance of the gory melodramas and gross extravagances then in vogue. The "Rent Day" was produced in 1831 or 32; and was fol-

lowed by "Nell Gwynne," "The Wedding Gown," "The Housekeeper," &c. &c. All these were in two acts, according to the absurd legal compulsion with regard to minor theatres, but which he endeavoured to write in the *spirit* of five.

Mr. Jerrold's position as a dramatist will receive attention in another portion of this work; he is at present chiefly dealt with as a writer of characteristic prose fictions, essays, *jeux d'esprits*, and miscellaneous periodical papers. About the year 1836 he published "Men of Character," in three volumes, most of which had previously appeared in "Blackwood;" and he also contributed to the "New Monthly" during two or three years. In 1842 appeared his "Bubbles of the Day," soon followed by a collection of essays, &c., entitled "Cakes and Ale;" and in 1843 "Punch's Letters to his Son." Mr. Jerrold has also written heaps of political articles, criticisms, and "leaders" without number. His last productions, up to the present date, are the "Story of a Feather," published in a series by the "Punch," and the "Chronicles of Clovernook" and "The Folly of the Sword" in the "Illuminated Magazine," which he edits.

Of writings so full of force and brightness to make themselves seen and felt, so full of thoroughgoing manly earnestness for the truth and the right—and so interspersed with tart sayings and bitter

irony, touched up with quills of caustic, in attacks of all abuses, viciousness, and selfish depravity—writings so easily accessible, so generally read, and about which there exist no disputes, and seldom any difference of opinion, it is impossible to say enough without saying much more than the majority need, and the only safe proceeding is obviously that of saying very little.

"Brevity" is no more "the soul of wit" than a short stick is the essence of comedy; it must not, therefore, be fancied that in uttering only the fewest words about such productions as "The Bubbles of the Day," the "Prisoners of War," &c., we think the best comment has been made upon them. But in truth they are of a kind that require to be read, and seen, and felt, rather than to be discoursed about. Mr. Jerrold never writes anything without a good leading idea, and this he works out chiefly by sharp dialogues, and striking exhibitions of truthful, clearly-defined, valuable characters, all full of life, and of themselves. He is not a good hand at the conduct of a story, and worse in the construction of a plot. In the "Bubbles of the Day" there is wit and character enough for two or three five-act comedies; and there is not story enough, nor action enough for a good one-act drama. He always succeeds, in spite of this utter deficiency, which is fatal to everybody else. Nothing can more forcibly attest the

presence of other striking powers. His wit, and his abundance of life-like character, are irresistible. Except, perhaps, a very few productions, such as the beautiful and melancholy sketch of "The Painter of Ghent,"—the "Lord of Peiresc," and some genial criticisms and miscellanies, all his works may be regarded as pungent moral satires. Thrown early upon life—a mere child, with all the world before him and around—his heart and brain still tumultuous, fresh from the bleak seas—with nothing but those two little unaided hands to work out his own immediate maintenance and future fortunes, and without a guide, except his own "natural promptings," Douglas Jerrold could not fail to see and suffer, and accumulate experience of a kind to turn much of the "milk of human kindness" into gall, and the hopefulness of youth and manhood into shadows and sorrow. But nothing ever quelled his energies and his belief in good; and a passage through early life, of a kind sufficient to have made a score of misanthropes, and half-a-dozen yet more selfish Apathies,—only served to keep alive his energies, and to excite him to renewed indignation at all the wrongs done in the world, and to unceasing contest with all sorts of oppressions and evil feelings. In waging this battle "against odds," it is curious to observe how entirely he has been "let alone" in his course. This may be, in part, attributable to the greater portion of his

writings appearing in periodicals, which are not generally so fiercely dealt with by adverse opinions, as when a work comes compact in its offences before them; and partly to the non-attachment of their just weight to dramatic productions: but it is also attributable to the fact, that while he is known to be thoroughly honest, outspoken, and fearless, he has at his command such an armoury in his wit, and such "a power" of bitterness in his spleen, that neither one, nor many have ever relished the chances of war in crossing his path with hostility.

The three writers who form the subject of the present paper, are so full of points and glances, so saturated with characteristics, that you may dip into any of their volumes, where the book fairly opens of itself, and you shall find something "just like the author." The Rev. Sydney Smith is always pleased to be so "pleasant," that it is extremely difficult to stop; and it is remarkable that he clears off his jokes so completely as he goes, either by a sweeping hand, or by carrying on such fragments as he wants to form a bridge to the next one, that you never pause in reading him till fairly obliged to lay down the book. Albany Fonblanque very often gives you pause amidst his pleasantries, many of which, nay, most of which, are upon subjects of politics, or jurisprudence, or the rights and wrongs of our social doings, so that the laugh often stops in mid-volley,

and changes into weighty speculation, or inward applause. In his combined powers of the brilliant and argumentative, the narrative and epigrammatic, and his matchless adroitness in illustrative quotation and reference, Fonblanque stands alone. Douglas Jerrold is seldom disposed to be "pleasant"—his merriment is grim—he does not shake your sides so often as shake you by the shoulders—as he would say, "See here, now!—look there now!—do you know what you are doing!—is *this* what you think of your fellow-creatures?" A little of his writing goes a great way. You stop very often, and do not return to the book for another dose, till next week, or so. The exceptions to this are chiefly in his acted comedies, where there is a plentiful admixture of brilliant levity and stinging fun; but in all else he usually reads you a lesson of a very trying kind. Even his writings in "Punch" give you more of the baton, than the beverage "in the eye." Sydney Smith has continually written articles for the pure enjoyment and communication of fun; Fonblanque never; Jerrold never, except on the stage—and that was probably only as "matter of income," rather than choice. Sydney Smith, in hostility, is an overwhelming antagonist; his arguments are glittering with laughter, and well balanced with good sense; they flow onwards with the ease and certainty of a current above a bright cascade; he piles up his merriment

like a grotesque mausoleum over his enemy, and so compactly and regularly that you feel no fear of its toppling over by any retort. Fonblanque seems not so much to fight "on editorial perch," as to stand with an open Code of Social Laws in one hand, and a two-edged sword in the other, waving the latter slowly to and fro with a grave face, while dictating his periods to the laughing amanuensis. As Jerrold's pleasantest works are generally covert satires, so his open satires are galling darts, or long bill-hook spears that go right through the mark, and divide it—pull it nearer for a "final eye," or thrust it over the pit's edge.

All these writers have used their wit in the cause of humanity, and honestly, according to their several views of what was best, and most needful to be done, or done away with. They have nobly used, and scarcely ever abused the dangerous, powerful, and tempting weapon of the faculty of wit. Some exceptions must be recorded. Sydney Smith has several times suffered his sense of the ridiculous to "run away" with his better feelings; and in subjects which were in themselves of a painful, serious, or shocking nature, he has allowed an absurd contingent circumstance to get the upper hand, to the injury, or discomfiture, or offence, of nature and society. Such was the fun he made of the locking people in railway-carriages upon the occasion of the frightful catas-

trophe at Versailles. Fonblanque has continually boiled and sparkled round the extreme edge of the same offence; but we think he has never actually gushed over. The same may be nearly said of Jerrold, though we think he has been betrayed by that scarcely resistible good or evil genius "a new subject" into several papers which he had much better never have written. One—the worst—should be mentioned: it is the "Metaphysician and the Maid."*

No doubt can exist as to who the bad satire was meant for. This was of itself sufficiently bad in the *et tu Brute* sense; but besides the personal hit, it has graver errors. If the paper had been meant to ridicule pretended thinkers, and besotted dreamers, those who prattle about motives, and springs, and "intimate knowledge" charlatan philosophers, or even well-meaning transcendentalists "who darken knowledge;" and if it had also been intended to laugh at a man for a vulgar amour, the mistaking a mere sensuality for a sentiment, or a doll for a divinity—all were so far very well and good. The "hit" at a man desperately in love who was in the middle of an essay on "Free Will," is all fair, and fine wit. But here the sincere and earnest thinker is ridiculed;—a well-known, sincere and profound thinker having been selected to stand for the class;—his private feelings are ridiculed (his being in a state

* "Cakes and Ale," vol. ii. p. 175.

of illusion as to the object, is too common to serve as excuse for the attack)—his passion for abstract truth is jested upon, and finally his generosity and unworldly disinterestedness. But the "true man's hand" misgave him in doing this deed. The irresistible "new subject" was not so strong as his own heart, and the influence of the very author he was, in this brief instance, turning into ridicule, was so full upon him that while intending to write a burlesque upon "deep thinking," he actually wrote as follows,—

"He alone, who has for months, nay years, lived upon great imaginings—*whose subject hath been a part of his blood*—a throb of his pulse—hath scarcely faded from his brain as he hath fallen to sleep—hath waked with him—hath, *in his squalid study, glorified even poverty*—hath walked with him abroad, and by its ennobling presence, raised him above the prejudice, the little spite, the studied negligence, the sturdy wrong, that in his out-door life sneer upon and elbow him,—he alone, can understand the calm, deep, yet, serene joy felt by * * *"

The foregoing noble and affecting passage—the climax of which is forced into a dull and laboured absurdity—is more than a parody, it is an unintentional imitation derived from some dim association with the well-known passage of Hazlitt's, commencing with—"There are moments in the life of a solitary thinker, which are to him what the evening of some great victory is to the conqueror—milder triumphs long remembered with truer and deeper delight, &c."*

* Hazlitt's "Principles of Human Action."

We leave these two passages with Mr. Jerrold for his own most serious consideration;—the original terminating with a natural climax — his own so abominably. It is probable that we could say nothing more strongly in reprehension than Mr. Jerrold will say to himself. As for the satire upon the weaknesses or follies of the strongest-minded men when in love, the "Liber Amoris" left nothing to be added to its running commentary of melancholy irony upon itself and its author.

It is customary in speaking of great wits, to record and enjoy their "last;" but there are, at this time, so many of Sydney Smith's "last" in the shape of remarks on the insolvent States of America, that it is difficult to choose. If, however, we were obliged to make selection for "our own private eating," we should point to the bankrupt army marching to defend their plunder, with *ære alieno* engraved upon the trumpets. For the voice of a trumpet can be made the most defying and insulting of all possible sounds, and in this instance even the very insolence of the "special pleader" is stolen—*ære alieno*, another man's *sarce!**.

Mr. Fonblanque's "last" are so regularly seen in the "Examiner," and there will, in all probability, have been so many of them before these pages are

* It also suggests the Latin idiom of *ære alieno exire*,—a new way to pay old debts.

published, that we must leave the reader to cater for himself; and more particularly as it would be impossible to please "all parties" with tranchant political jokes upon matters of immediate interest and contest. But nothing can more forcibly prove the true value of Mr. Fonblanque's wit than the fact that all the papers collected in "England under Seven Administrations" were written upon passing events; that most of the events are passed, and the wit remains. A greater disadvantage no writings ever had to encounter; yet they are read with pleasure and admiration; and, in many instances, (but too fresh and vigorous,) with improvement, and renewed wonder that certain abuses should be of so long life.

Mr. Jerrold's two "last" we may select from the "History of a Feather," and the "Folly of the Sword." In the first we shall allude to the biting satire of the Countess of Blushrose, who being extremely beautiful, was very proud and unfeeling towards the poor; but after over-dancing herself one night at a ball, she got the erysipelas which spoiled her face, and she then became an angel of benevolence who could never stir abroad without "walking in a shower of blessings." In the second we find the following remark on war and glory.

"Now look aside, and contemplate God's image with a musket. What a fine-looking thing is war! Yet, dress it as we may, dress and feather it, daub it with gold, huzza it, and sing swaggering songs about it—

what is it, nine times out of ten, but Murder in uniform? Cain taking the serjeant's shilling? * * * Yet, oh man of war! at this very moment are you shrinking, withering, like an aged giant. The fingers of Opinion have been busy at your plumes—you are not the feathered thing you were; and then this little tube, the goose-quill, has sent its silent shots into your huge anatomy; and the corroding INK, even whilst you look at it, and think it shines so brightly, is eating with a tooth of iron into your sword!"

Our last extract shall be from Sydney Smith's celebrated Letters of Peter Plymley, and on a subject now likely to occupy the public mind still more than at the time it was penned:—

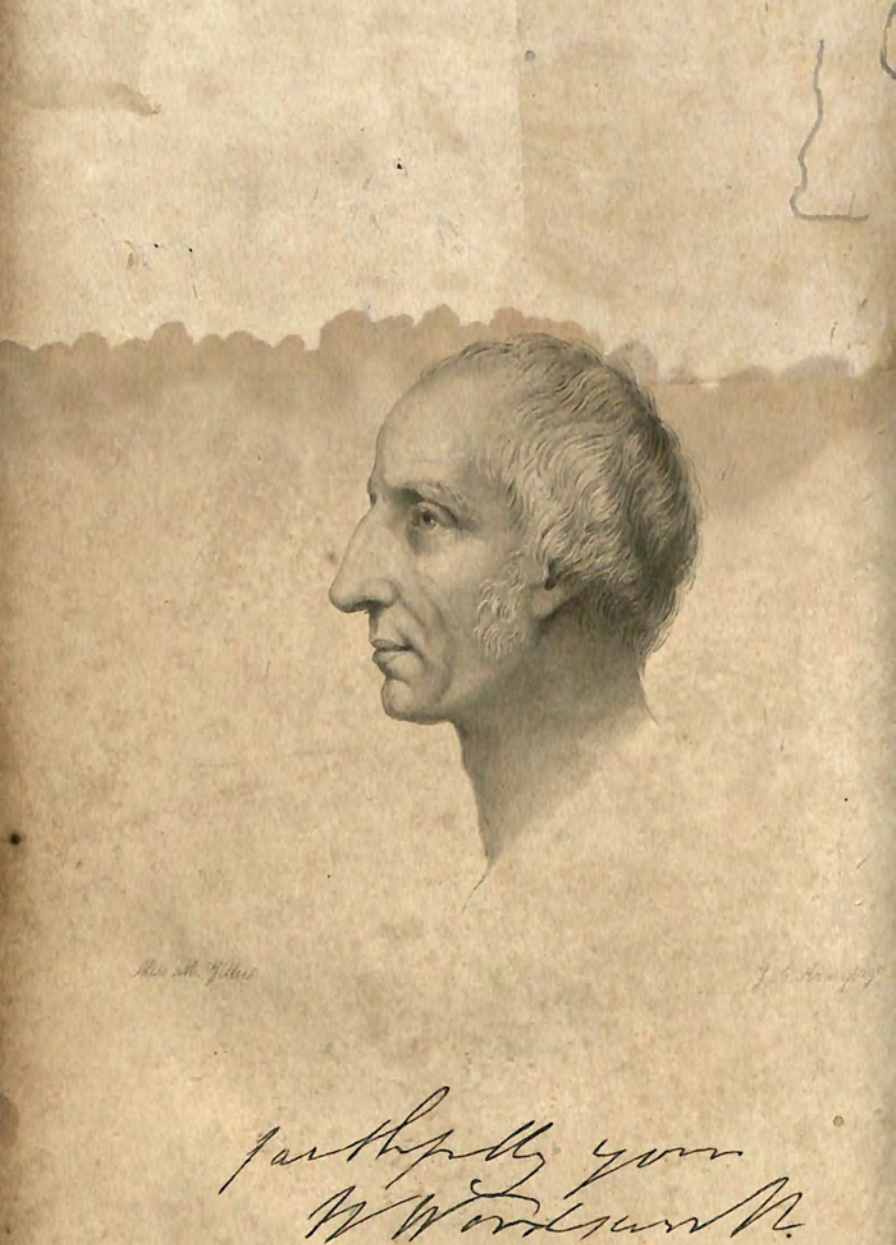
"Our conduct to Ireland, during the whole of this war, has been that of a man who subscribes to hospitals, weeps at charity sermons, carries out broth and blankets to beggars, and then comes home and beats his wife and children. We had compassion for the victims of all other oppression and injustice, except our own. If Switzerland was threatened, away went a Treasury Clerk with a hundred thousand pounds for Switzerland; large bags of money were kept constantly under sailing orders; upon the slightest demonstration towards Naples, down went Sir William Hamilton upon his knees, and begged for the love of St. Januarius they would help us off with a little money; all the arts of Machiavel were resorted to, to persuade Europe to borrow; troops were sent off in all directions to save the Catholic and Protestant world; the Pope himself was guarded by a regiment of English dragoons; if the Grand Lama had been at hand, he would have had another; every Catholic Clergyman, who had the good fortune to be neither English nor Irish, was immediately provided with lodging, soup, crucifix, missal, chapel-beads, relics, and holy water; if Turks had landed, Turks would have received an order from the Treasury for coffee, opium, korans, and seraglios. In the midst of all this fury of saving and defending, this crusade for conscience and Christianity,

there was an universal agreement among all descriptions of people to continue every species of internal persecution; to deny at home every just right that had been denied before; to pummel poor Dr. Abraham Rees and his Dissenters; and to treat the unhappy Catholics of Ireland as if their tongues were mute, their heels cloven, their nature brutal, and designedly subjected by Providence to their Orange masters.

"How would my admirable brother, the Rev. Abraham Plymley, like to be marched to a Catholic chapel, to be sprinkled with the sanctified contents of a pump, to hear a number of false quantities in the Latin tongue, and to see a number of persons occupied in making right angles upon the breast and forehead? And if all this would give you so much pain, what right have you to march Catholic soldiers to a place of worship, where there is *no* aspersion, *no* rectangular gestures, *and where they understand every word they hear*, having first, in order to get him to enlist, made a solemn promise to the contrary? Can you wonder, after this, that the Catholic priest stops the recruiting in Ireland, as he is now doing to a most alarming degree?"

The influence of these three writers has been extensive, and vigorously beneficial — placing their politics out of the question. Their aqua fortis and "laughing gas" have exercised alike a purificatory office; their championship has been strong on the side of social ameliorations and happy progress. The deep importance of national education on a proper system has been finely advocated by each in his peculiar way—Sydney Smith by excessive ridicule of the old and present system; Fonblanque by administering a moral cane and caustic to certain pastors and masters and ignorant pedagogues of all kinds; and Jerrold

by such tales as the "Lives of Brown, Jones, and Robinson," (in vol. ii. of "Cakes and Ale,") and by various essays. If in the conflict of parties the Reverend Sydney Smith and Mr. Fonblanque have once or twice been sharply handled, they might reasonably have expected much worse. As for vague accusations of levity and burlesque, and want of "a well-regulated mind," and trifling and folly, those things are always said of all such men. It is observable that very dull men and men incapable of wit—either in themselves, or of the comprehension of it in others—invariably call every witty man, and every witty saying, which is not quite agreeable to themselves, by the term *flippant*. Let the wits and humourists be consoled; they have the best of it, and the dull ones know it.



Alex. M. Gillies

J. C. Armytage

Faithfully yours
W. Wordsworth

Published by Smith, Elder & Co. 65 Cornhill.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

AND

LEIGH HUNT.

" I judge him for a rectified spirit,
By many revolutions of discourse,
(In his bright reason's influence) refined
From all the tartarous moods of common men;
Bearing the nature and similitude
Of a right heavenly body; most severe
In fashion and collection of himself;
And, then, as clear and confident as Jove."

BEN JONSON.

" You will see H—t; one of those happy souls
Which are the salt o' the earth, and without whom
This world would smell like what it is—a tomb."

SHELLEY.

" Most debonnaire, in courtesy supreme;
Loved of the mean, and honored by the great;
Ne'er dashed by Fortune, nor cast down by Fate;
To present and to after times a theme."

DRUMMOND.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

AND

LEIGH HUNT.

THESE two laurelled veterans, whose lives are clad with the eternal youth of poesy, have been so long before the public, and their different and contrasted claims may be thought to have been so thoroughly settled, that it will, perhaps, as a first impression, be considered that there was no necessity for including them in this work. They are, however, introduced as highly important connecting links between past and present periods; as the outlivers of many storms; the originators of many opinions and tastes; the sufferers of odium, partly for their virtues, and in some respects for their perversities; and the long wounded but finally victorious experiencers of popular changes of mind during many years. If, therefore, it should still be thought that nothing

very new remains to be said of them, it is submitted that at least there are some truths concerning both, which have never yet been fairly brought into public notice.

When Mr. Wordsworth first stood before the world as a poet, he might as well, for the sorriness of his reception, have stood before the world as a prophet. In some such position, perhaps, it may be said he actually did stand; and he had prophet's fare in a shower of stones. For several generations, had the cadences of our poets (so called) moved to them along the ends of their fingers. Their language had assumed a conventional elegance, spreading smoothly into pleonasms or clipped nicely into elisions. The point of an antithesis had kept perpetual sentry upon the 'final pause;' and while a spurious imagination made a Name stand as a personification, Observation only looked out of window ("with extensive view" indeed .. "from China to Peru!") and refused very positively to take a step out of doors. A long and dreary decline of poetry it was, from the high-rolling sea of Dryden, or before Dryden, when Waller first began to "improve" (bona verba!) our versification — down to the time of Wordsworth. Milton's far-off voice, in the meantime, was a trumpet, which the singing-birds could not take a note from: his genius was a lone island in a remote sea, and singularly

uninfluential on his contemporaries and immediate successors. The decline sloped on. And that edition of the poets which was edited by Dr. Johnson for popular uses, and in which he and his publishers did advisedly obliterate from the chronicles of the people, every poet before Cowley, and force the Chaucers, Spencers, and Draytons to give place to "Pomfret's Choice" and the "Art of Cookery,"—is a curious proof of poetical and critical degradation. "Every child is graceful," observes Sir Joshua Reynolds, with a certain amount of truth, "until he has learnt to dance." We had learned to dance with a vengeance—we could not move except we danced—the French school pirouetted in us most anti-nationally. The age of Shakspere and our great ancestral writers had grown to be rococo—*they* were men of genius and deficient in 'taste,' but *we* were wits and classics—we exceeded in civilization, and wore wigs. It was not, however, to end so.

Looking back to the experiences of nations, a national literature is seldom observed to recover its voice after an absolute declension: the scattered gleaners may be singing in the stubble, but the great song of the harvest sounds but once. Into the philosophy of this fact, it would take too much space to enquire. That genius comes as a periodical effluence, and in dependence on unmanifest causes, is the confession of grave thinkers, rather than fanciful speculators; and perhaps if the Roman

empire, for instance, could have endured in strength, and held its mighty breath until the next tide, some Latin writer would have emerged from the onward flood of inspiration which was bearing Dante to the world's wide shores. Unlike Dante, indeed, would have been that writer—for no author, however influential on his contemporaries, can be perfectly independent himself of their influences—but he would have been a Latin writer, and his hexameters worth waiting for. And England did not wait in vain for a *new* effluence of genius—it came at last like the morning—a pale light in the sky, an awakening bird, and a sunburst—we had Cowper—we had Burns—that lark of the new grey dawn; and presently the early-risers of the land could see to spell slowly out the name of William Wordsworth. They saw it and read it clearly with those of Coleridge and Leigh Hunt,—and subsequently of Shelley and Keats, notwithstanding the dazzling beams of lurid power which were in full radiation from the engrossing name of Byron.

Mr. Wordsworth began his day with a dignity and determination of purpose, which might well have startled the public and all its small poets and critics, his natural enemies. He laid down fixed principles in his prefaces, and carried them out with rigid boldness, in his poems; and when the world laughed, he bore it well, for his logic apprized him of what should follow: nor was he without the sympathy

of Coleridge and a few other first-rate intellects. With a severe hand he tore away from his art, the encumbering artifices of his predecessors; and he walked upon the pride of criticism with greater pride. No toleration would he extend to the worst laws of a false critical code; nor any conciliation to the critics who had enforced them. He was a poet, and capable of poetry, he thought, only as he was a man and faithful to his humanity. He would not separate poetry and nature, even in their forms. Instead of being "classical" and a "wit," he would be a poet and a man, and "like a man," (notwithstanding certain weak moments) he spoke out bravely, in language free of the current phraseology and denuded of conventional adornments, the thought which was in him. And the thought and the word witnessed to that verity of nature, which is eternal—with variety. He laid his hand upon the Pegasean mane, and testified that it was not floss silk. He testified that the ground was not all lawn or bowling-green; and that the forest trees were not clipped upon a pattern. He scorned to be contented with a tradition of beauty, or with an abstraction of the beautiful. He refused to work, as others had done, like those sculptors, who make all their noses in the fashion of that of the Medicæan Venus; until no one has his own nose; nature being "cut to order." William Wordsworth would accept no type for nature: he would take no leap at the generalization of the

natural; and the brown moss upon the pale should be as sacred to him and acceptable to his song, as the pine-clothed mountain. He is a poet of detail, and sings of what is closest to his eye; as small starting points for far views, deep sentiment, and comprehensive speculation. "The meanest flower that blows" is not too mean for him; exactly because "thoughts too deep for tears" lie for him in the mystery of its meanness. He has proved this honor on the universe; that in its meanest natural thing is no vulgarism, unconveyed by the artificiality of human manners. That such a principle should lead to some puerilities at the outset, was not surprising.

A minute observer of exterior nature, his humanity seems nevertheless to stand between it and him; and he confounds those two lives—not that he loses himself in the contemplation of things, but that he absorbs them in himself, and renders them Wordsworthian. They are not what he wishes, until he has brought them home to his own heart. Chaucer and Burns made the most of a daisy, but left it still a daisy; Mr. Wordsworth leaves it transformed into *his* thoughts. This is the sublime of egotism, disinterested as extreme. It is on the entity of the man Wordsworth, that the vapour creeps along the hill — and "the mountains are a feeling." To use the language of the German schools, he makes a subjectivity of his objectivity. Beyond the habits and purposes of his individuality,

he cannot carry his sympathies; and of all powerful writers, he is the least dramatic. Another reason, however, for his dramatic inaptitude, is his deficiency in passion. He is passionate in his will and reason, but not in his senses and affections; and perhaps scarcely in his fancy and imagination. He has written, however, one of the noblest odes in the English language, in his "Recollections of Childhood;" and his chief poem "The Excursion," which is only a portion of a larger work (to be published hereafter) called "The Recluse," has passages of very glorious exaltation. Still, he is seldom impulsive; and his exaltation is rather the nobly-acquired habit of his mind than the prerogative of his temperament. A great Christian moralist and teacher, he is sacerdotal both in gravity and purity; he is majestic and self-possessed. Like many other great men he *can* be dull and prolix. If he has not written too many sonnets, it may be doubted if he has not burned too few: none are bad, it is true; but the value of the finest would be enhanced by separation from so much fatiguing good sense. They would be far more *read*. Perhaps, his gravity and moral aim are Mr. Wordsworth's most prevailing characteristics. His very cheerfulness is a smile over the altar,—a smile of benediction which no one dares return,—and expressive of good will rather than sympathy.

These remarks have doubtless occurred to many

students and admirers of Wordsworth; but it is more remarkable that he is what he is, not unconsciously or instinctively, as many other men of genius have developed their idiosyncracies; but consciously, to all appearance, and determinately, and by a particular act of the will. Moreover, he is not only a self-conscious thinker and feeler; but he is conscious, apparently, of this self-consciousness.

When Mr. Wordsworth had published his "Lyrical Ballads," out swarmed the critics,—with reference to the accidental gathering together in his neighbourhood of certain poets, (who, although men of genius and impatient of the trammels of the scholastic rhymers, were not so "officially" reformers, nor partakers of his characteristics;)—out swarmed the critics, declaring that the Lyrical Balladmonger had a school, and that it should be called the "Lake School." It was a strange mistake, even for the craft. Here was a man reproached by themselves, with all anti-scholastic offences, a man who had made mock at the formulas, confused the classes, and turned the schoolmasters out of doors!—and he must be placed in a school, forsooth, for the sake of those who could discern nothing out of the subdivisions of the schools. The critical "memoria technica" required that it should be so arranged. And, verily, when Wordsworth and his peers looked up to the sublime Lake mountains, and down to the serene

Lake waters, they were probably consoled for the slang, by the dignity and holiness of this enforced association. It was otherwise in the matter of another calling of names, nearly simultaneously effected; when Leigh Hunt and his friends were saluted in London, by that nickname of the "Cockney School," which was so incessantly repeated and applied to almost everybody who ventured to write a verse, that at length it became the manifest sign of a juvenile Cockney critic to use the term. It was presently superseded by the new nickname of "Satanic School," which, however, unlike the others, had some sort of foundation.

The Cockney School was as little-minded a catch-word of distinctive abuse, as ever came from the splenetic pen of a writer "at a loss for something." The cheek of the impartial historian, as of the true critic of present times, flushes in having to recount, that Lamb, who stammered out in child-like simplicity, his wit beautiful with wisdom,—that Coleridge, so full of genius and all rare acquirements,—that Hazlitt, who dwelt gloriously with philosophy in a chamber of imagery,—that Shelley, with his wings of golden fire, —that Keats who saw divine visions, and the pure Greek ideal, because he had the essence in his soul,— that Leigh Hunt (now the sole survivor of all these) true poet and exquisite essayist,—and finally Alfred Tennyson—were of the writers so stigmatized! Event-

ually the term was used as a reproach by people who had never been out of London, and by Scotchmen who had never been out of Edinburgh — and then—that is, when this fact was discovered pretty generally—then the epithet was no more heard. But while in use, its meaning seemed to be—pastoral, minus nature; and it is a curious and striking fact, that every one of the eminent men to whom it was applied was a marked example of the very contrary characteristic. It hence would appear that the term was chiefly applicable to the men themselves who used it; because, knowing nothing of pastoral nature, they did not recognise it when placed before them, but conceived it must be a mere affectation of something beyond their own civic ideas. If the word had meant simply an exclusion, as livers in cities, from a familiarity with the country—if it had meant the acquirement of conventional views and artificial habits from this accident of place; then it suited Dr. Johnson, Pope, and his "wits about town" with tolerable propriety.

Leigh Hunt, the poet of "Foliage" and the "Story of Rimini," the author of some of the most exquisite essays in the English language, of a romance, ("Sir Ralph Esher,") full of power and beauty, and of the "Legend of Florence," a production remarkable for dramatic excellence and a pure

spirit of generous and refined morality, is likely to be honoured with more love from posterity, than he ever received, or can hope to receive, from his contemporary public. Various circumstances combined to the ruffling of the world beneath his feet—and the two years of his imprisonment, for libel, when he covered his prison-walls with garlands of roses, and lived, in spite of fate and the king's attorney-general, in a bower—present a type, in the smiling quaintness of their oppositions, of the bitterness and sweetness, the constraint and gay-heartedness of his whole life besides. At the very time he was thus imprisoned, his physician had ordered him much horse-exercise, his health having been greatly impaired by sedentary habits. Still, he covered the walls of his room with garlands.

On a survey of the ordinary experiences of poets, we are apt to come hastily to a conclusion, that a true poet may have quite enough tribulation by his poetry, for all good purposes of adversity, without finding it necessary to break any fresh ground of vexation:—but Leigh Hunt, imprudent in his generation, was a gallant politician, as well as a genuine poet; and, by his connection with the "Examiner" newspaper, did, in all the superfluity of a youth full of animal spirits, sow the whirlwind and reap the tornado. We have also heard of some other literary offences of thirty or forty years ago, but nobody cares

to recollect them. In religious feeling, however, he has been misrepresented. It is certain that no man was ever more capable of the spirit of reverence; for God gifted him with a loving genius—with a genius to love and bless. He looks full tenderly into the face of every man, and woman, and child, and living creature; and the beautiful exterior world, even when it is in angry mood, he smoothes down softly, as in recognition of its sentiency, with a gentle caressing of the fancy—Chaucer's irrepressible "Ah, benedicite," falling for ever from his lips! There is another point of resemblance between him and several of the elder poets, who have a social joyous full-heartedness; a pathetic sweetness; a love of old stories, and of sauntering about green places; and a liking for gardens and drest nature, as well as fields and forests; though he is not always so simple as they, in his mode of describing, but is apt to elaborate his admiration, while his elder brothers described the thing—and left it so. He presses into association with the old Elizabethan singing choir, just as the purple light from Italy and Marini had flushed their foreheads; and he is an Italian scholar himself, besides having read the Greek idyls. He has drunken deep from "the beaker full of the warm South," and loves to sit in the sun, indolently turning and shaping a fancy "light as air," or—and here he has never had justice done him—in brooding deeply

over the welfare, the struggles, and hopes of humanity. Traces of this high companionship and these pleasant dispositions are to be found like lavender between the leaves of his books; while a fragrance native to the ground—which would be enough for the reader's pleasure, though the lavender were shaken out—diffuses itself fresh and peculiar over all. He is an original writer: his individuality extending into mannerism, which is individuality prominent in the mode. When he says new things, he puts them strikingly; when he says old things, he puts them newly — and no intellectual and good-tempered reader will complain of this freshness, on account of a certain "knack at trifling," in which he sometimes chooses to indulge. He does, in fact, constrain such a reader into sympathy with him—constrain him to be glad "with the spirit of joy" of which he, the poet, is possessed—and no living poet has that obvious and overflowing delight in the bare act of composition, of which this poet gives sign. 'Composition' is not a word for him—we might as well use it of a bird—such is the ease with which it seems to flow! Yet he is an artist and constructer also, and is known to work very hard at times before it comes out so bright, and graceful, and pretending to have cost no pains at all. He spins golden lines round and round and round, as a silk-worm in its cocoon. He is not without consciousness of art—only he is

conscious less of design in it, than of pleasure and beauty. His excessive consciousness of grace in the turning of a line, and of richness in the perfecting of an image, is what some people have called "coxcombry;" and the manner of it approaches to that conscious, sidelong, swimming gait, balancing between the beautiful and the witty, which is remarkable in some elder poets. His versification is sweet and various, running into Chaucer's cadences. His blank verse is the most successfully original in its freedom, of any that has appeared since the time of Beaumont and Fletcher. His images are commonly beautiful, if often fantastic—clustering like bees, or like grapes—sometimes too many for the vines—a good fault in these bare modern days. His gatherings from nature are true to nature; and we might quote passages which would disprove the old bygone charge of 'Cockneyism,' by showing that he had brought to bear an exceeding niceness of actual observation upon the exterior world. His nature, however, is seldom moor-land and mountain-land; nor is it, for the most part, English nature—we have hints of fauns and the nymphs lying hidden in the shadow of the old Italian woods; and the sky overhead is several tints too blue for home experiences. It is nature, not by tradition, like Pope's nature, nor quite by sensation and reflection, like Wordsworth's: it is nature by memory and phan-

tasy; true, but touched with an exotic purple. His sympathies with men are wide as the distance between joy and grief; and while his laughter is audible and resistless, in pathos and depth of tender passionateness he is no less sufficient. The tragic power of the "Story of Rimini" has scarcely been exceeded by any English poet, alive or dead; and his "Legend of Florence" is full of the 'purification of pity,' and the power of the most Christian-like manhood and sympathy. We might have fancied that the consciousness of pleasure in composition, which has been attributed to this poet, and the sense of individuality which it implies, would have interfered with the right exercise of the dramatic faculty — but the reason of tears is probably stronger in him than the consciousness of beauty. He has in him, and has displayed it occasionally, an exaltation and a sense of the divine, under a general aspect: a very noble dramatic lyric on the liberation of the soul from the body, published within the last seven years, has both those qualities, in the highest degree. But no one can form a full or correct idea of the pure and deep religious feeling of Leigh Hunt without reading his "Christianism"—a brief collection of devotional exercises. It is right, however, to state that, though printed, it has only been circulated privately.

In attempting some elucidatory contrast between

the poets William Wordsworth and Leigh Hunt, as one of the applications of the foregoing remarks, it is not meant that their positions as poets and teachers (and all poets must be teachers) are alike in any external respects. We are not to forget that Mr. Wordsworth took the initiative in the great poetical movement of his times. Both, however, are poets and teachers, and both have been martyrs by distinction of persecution, and both were placed in "a school," by the critics, in a manner unsolicited and unjustified. Both are poets, but Wordsworth is so upon a scheme, and determinately; Hunt, because he could not help it, and instinctively—the first, out of the entireness of his will; the last, out of the fulness of his fancy. Both were reformers, but Hunt, like Melancthon, despising the later, and cleaving to the earlier Christians,—embraced the practice of Chaucer and of the Elizabethan men, as eagerly as a doctrine; while Wordsworth threw himself straight over all the fathers and ancestral poets, into the 'philosophia prima' of first principles. Not that Hunt rejected the first principles, nor Wordsworth the ancestral poets; but that the instinct of the former worked in him, while the ratiocination of the latter worked out of him. Both have an extraordinary consciousness—but Wordsworth has it in the determination of ends, and Hunt in the elaboration of details;—and in the first we discover the

duty of the artist, and in the latter his pleasure. In exterior nature, Wordsworth has a wider faith, or a less discriminating taste. He draws her up into the embrace of his soul as he sees her, undivided and unadorned — a stick in the hedge he would take up into his song — but Hunt believes in nothing except beauty, and would throw away the stick, or cover it with a vine or woodbine. Hunt is more impressionable towards men—Wordsworth holds their humanity within his own, and teaches them out of it, and blesses them from the heights of his priestly office,—while it is enough for the other poet to weep and smile with them openly, what time he 'blesseth them unaware.' Hunt is more passionate, more tragic; and he has also a more rapid fancy, and a warmer imagination under certain aspects; but Wordsworth exceeds him in the imagination '*in intellectú*.' The imagination of the latter calls no "spirit," nor men from the vasty deep, but is almost entirely confined to the illustration of his own thoughts. The imagination of the former is habitually playful, and not disposed for sustained high exercise. William Wordsworth is a spiritual singer, a high religious singer, and none the less holy because he stands firmly still to reason among the tossings of the censers; while Leigh Hunt is disposed to taste the odours of each while the worship is going on. Wordsworth is habitually cold, distant,

grave, inflexible; Hunt exactly the opposite in each respect. The sympathies of Leigh Hunt are universal, in philosophy and in private habits; the poetical sympathies of William Wordsworth are with primitive nature and humble life, but his personal sympathies are conventional and aristocratical. Leigh Hunt converses as well as he writes, often better, ready on every point, with deep sincerity on all serious subjects, and far in advance of his age; with a full and pleasant memory, of books, and men, and things; and with a rich sense of humour and a quick wit. Mr. Wordsworth does not converse. He announces formally at times, but he cannot find a current. He is moral, grave, good-natured, and of kindly intercourse. He does not understand a joke, but requires it to be explained; after which he looks uneasy. It is not his point. He sees nothing in it. The thing is not, and cannot be made Wordsworthian. He reads poetry very grandly, and with solemnity. Leigh Hunt also reads admirably, and with the most expressive variety of inflection, and natural emphasis. He is fond of music, and sings and accompanies himself with great expression. Mr. Wordsworth does not care much about music. He prefers to walk on the mountains in a high wind, bare-headed and alone, and listen to the far-off roar of streams, and watch the scudding clouds while he repeats his verse aloud.

Certain opinions concerning eminent men which have grown into the very fibres of the public mind, are always expected to be repeated whenever the individual is spoken of. To this there may be no great objection, provided a writer conscientiously feels the truth of those opinions. With reference, therefore, to Wordsworth, as the poet of profound sentiment, elevated humanity, and religious emotion, responding to the universe around, we respectfully accept and record the popular impression; asking permission, however, to offer a few remarks of our own for further consideration.

After the public had denied Mr. Wordsworth the possession of any of the highest faculties of the mind during twenty years, the same public has seen good of late to reward him with all the highest faculties in excess. The imagination of Wordsworth is sublime in elevation, and as the illustrator of reflection; but it is very limited. It is very deficient in invention,—*see* his "Poems of the Imagination." They perfectly settle the question. The fine things which are there (in rather indifferent company) we know, and devoutly honour; but we also know what is *not* there. He has a small creative spirit; narrow, without power, and ranging over a barren field. These remarks cannot *honestly* be quoted apart from the rest of what is said of Mr. Wordsworth; such remarks, however, must be made, or the genius in

question is not justly measured. He has no sustained plastic energies; no grand constructive power in general design of a continuous whole, either of subject, or of individual characters. His universality is in humanity, not in creative energies. He has no creative passion. His greatness is lofty and reflective, and his imagination turns like a zodiac upon its own centre, lit by its own internal sun. If at times it resembles the bare, dry, attenuated littleness of a school-boy's hoop, *he* may insist upon admiring this as much as his best things, but posterity will not be convinced. It is in vain to be obstinate against time; for some day the whole truth is sure to be said, and some day it is sure to be believed.

The prose writings of these distinguished poets are strikingly qualified to bring under one view these various points of contrast: and yet it must be granted, at the first glance, that Wordsworth's prose is only an exposition of the principles of his poetry, or highly valuable as an appendix to his poems; while if Leigh Hunt had never written a line as a poet, his essays would have proved him an exquisite writer, and established his claim upon posterity. As it is, he has two claims; and is not likely to be sent back for either of them, not even as the rival of Addison. The motto to his "London Journal" is highly characteristic of him—"To assist the inquiring, animate the struggling, and sympathise

with *all.*" The very philosophy of cheerfulness and the good humour of genius imbue all his prose papers from end to end; and if the best dreamer of us all should dream of a poet at leisure, and a scholar "in idleness," neither scholar nor poet would speak, in that air of dreamland, more graceful, wise and scholar-like fancies than are written in his books. Mr. Wordsworth on the other hand remits nothing of his poetic austerity, when he condescends to speak prose; if anything, he is graver than ever, with an additional tone of the dictator. He teaches as from the chair, and with the gesture of a master, as he is,—learnedly, wisely, sometimes eloquently, and not unseldom coldly and heavily, and with dull redundancy; but always with a self-possessed and tranquil faith in the truth which is in him, and (considering it is poet's prose) with a curious deficiency of imagery and metaphor, not as if in disdain of the adornment and illustration, but rather as being unable to ascend from the solid level without the metrical pinions.

The work that Leigh Hunt has done, may be expressed in the few words of a dedication made to him some years since.* "You have long assisted," says the dedication,—"largely and most successfully—to educate the hearts and heads of both old and young; and *the extent of the service is scarcely per-*

* See the "Death of Marlowe."

ceptible, because the free and familiar spirit in which it has been rendered gives it the semblance of an involuntary emanation. The spontaneous diffusion of intelligence and good feeling is not calculated, however, to force its attention upon general perception, &c." The meaning of all this is, that Leigh Hunt has no "system," and no sustained gravity of countenance, and therefore the fineness of his intellect, and the great value of his unprofessor-like teaching has been extremely underrated. The dedication also marks this disgrace to the age—which shall be as distinctly stated as such a disgrace deserves—that while the public generally takes it for granted that Mr. Leigh Hunt is on the Pension List, he most certainly is *not*, and never has been!

Both of these authors have written too much; Wordsworth from choice; Leigh Hunt less from choice than necessity. The first thinks that all he has written must be nearly of equal value, because he takes equal pains with everything; the second evidently knows the inferiority of many of his productions—"but what is a poet to do who follows literature as a profession?" Few can afford to please themselves.

After twenty years of public abuse and laughter, William Wordsworth is now regarded by the public of the same country, as the prophet of his age. And this is not a right view — after all.

Wordsworth's feeling for pastoral nature, and the depths of sentiment which he can deduce from such scenes, and the lesson of humanity he can read to the heart of man, are things, in themselves, for all time; but as the prophetic spirit is essentially that of a passionate foreseeing and annunciation of some extraneous good tidings to man; in this sense Wordsworth is not a prophet. His sympathies, and homilies, and invocations, are devoted to the pantheistic forms of nature, and what they suggest to his own soul of glory and perpetuity; but he does not cry aloud to mankind like a "voice in the wilderness," that the way should be "made straight," that a golden age will come, or a better age, or that the time may come when "poor humanity's afflicted will" shall *not* struggle altogether in vain with ruthless destiny. His Sonnets in favour of the punishment of Death, chiefly on the ground of not venturing to meddle with an old law, are the tomb of his prophet-title. He is a prophet of the Past. His futurity is in the eternal form of things, and the aspiration of his own soul towards the spirit of the universe; but as for the destinies of mankind, he looks back upon them with a sigh, and thinks that as they were in the beginning, so shall they be world without end. His "future can but be the past." He dictates, he does not predict: he is a teacher and a preacher in the highest sense, but he does not image forth the To-

Come, or sound the trumpet of mighty changes in the horizon.

It is wonderful to see how great things are sometimes dependent upon small, not for their existence, but for their temporary effect. Anything essentially great in its mentality, will be lasting when once the world appreciates it; the period of this commencement, however, may be retarded beyond the life of the originator, and perhaps far longer, merely by its being accompanied with some perfectly extraneous form or fancy which has caught the public ear, and caused the airy part to be mistaken for the substantial whole, the excrescence for the centre. Mr. Leigh Hunt was generally very felicitous in certain words and phrases, and admirable for reconciling the jarring discord of evil sayings and doings; but he had half-a-dozen words and phrases which people "agreed to hate," and he would never cease to use; and they were also provoked at his tendency to confuse the distinctions of sympathy and antipathy, by saying too much on the amiable side of the condemned, so that, after all, mankind seemed to be wrong in definitely deciding for the right. Metaphysically, he may be correct; but "practice drives us mad." The Fish who became wiser when changed into a Man, and again wiser when changed into a Spirit, (*see* Hunt's inimitable poem on the subject,) might have had still more knowledge to commu-

nicate if he had been put back once more to a Fish. Something very like the principle here discussed, is discoverable in Chaucer and Shakspere, who usually give the bane and antidote in close relation, do justice to every one on all sides, and never insist upon a good thing nor a bad one, but display an impartiality which often amounts to the humorous. Leigh Hunt's manner of doing this was the chief offence, for while the elder poets left the readers to their own conclusions, our author chose to take the case upon himself, so that he became identified with the provocation of those readers who were defeated of an expected decision. In Mr. Wordsworth's case there was a more deliberate and settled design in his offence. Subjects and characters seemed to be chosen, and entire poems written expressly with a view to provoke ridicule and contempt. He wrote many poems which were trivial, puerile, or mere trash. Not a doubt of it. There stand the very poems still in his works! Anybody can see them—the ungrateful monuments of a great poet. Weakness, reared by his own hands, and kept in repair to his latest day! Let no false pen garble these remarks, and say that the essayist calls the high-minded and true poet Wordsworth bad names, and depreciates his genius; let the remarks of the whole be fairly taken. With this peremptory claim for justice and fair dealing on all sides, be it stated as

an opinion, that poems, in which, by carrying a great principle to a ridiculous extreme, are gravely "exalted" garden-spades, common streets, small celandines, waggoners, beggars, household commonplaces, and matter-of-fact details, finished up like Dutch pictures and forced upon the attention as pre-eminently claiming profound admiration or reverence—that these deliberate outrages upon true taste, judgment, and the ideality of poetry, cost a great poet twenty years of abuse and laughter—during which period thousands of people died without knowing his genius, who might otherwise have been refined and elevated, and more "fit" to die into a higher existence.

Now, however, all these small offences are merged in a public estimation, which seems likely to endure with our literature. Wordsworth is taken into the reverence of the intellect, and Leigh Hunt into the warm recesses of the affections. The one elevates with the sense of moral dignity; the other refines with a loving spirit, and instructs in smiles. And this is their influence upon the present age.

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